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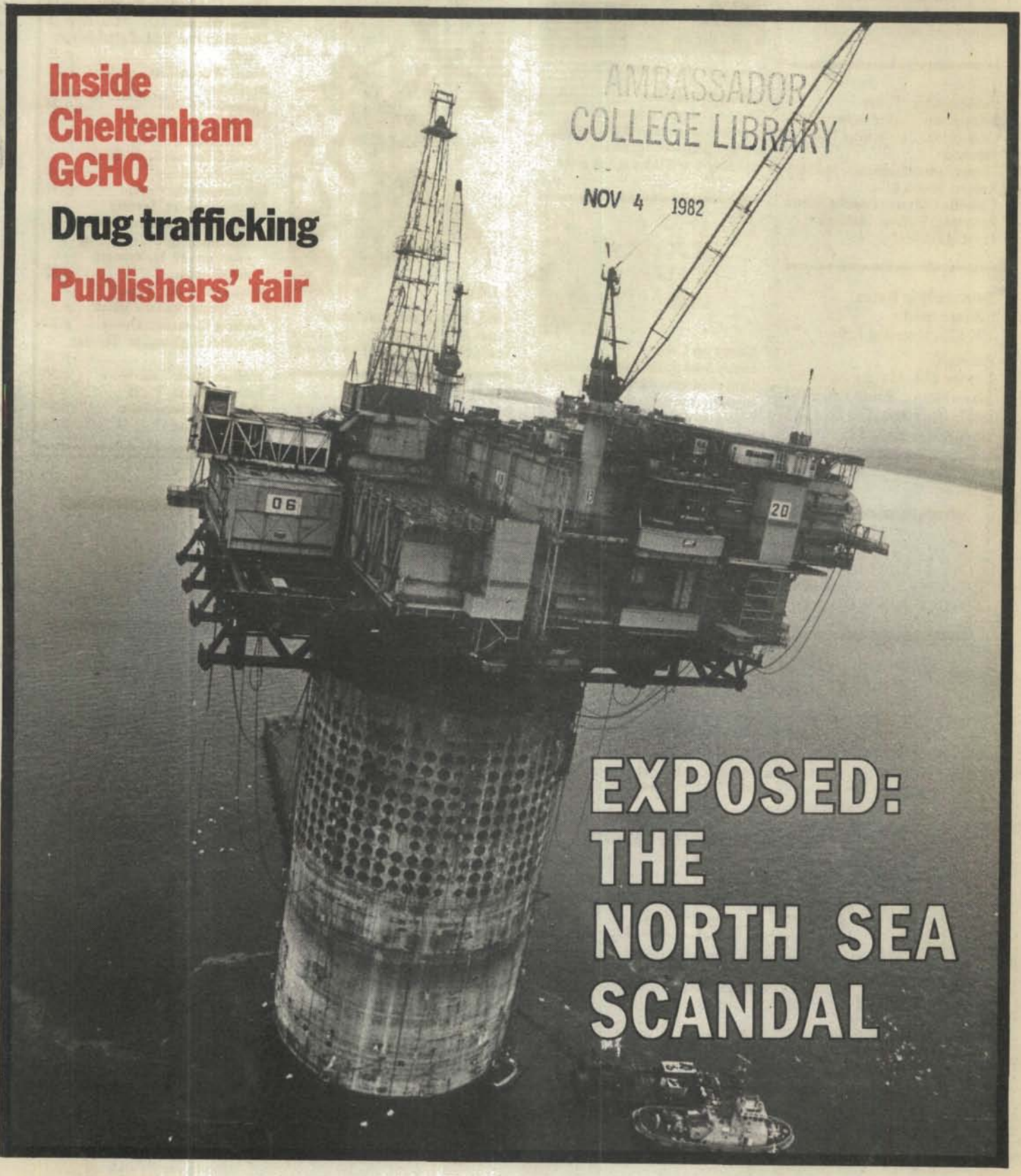
New Statesman



Inside Cheltenham GCHQ

Drug trafficking

Publishers' fair

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New Statesman

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New Statesman Vol 104 No 2693 29 October 1982

Walrus and the Carpenter

WHY DOES THE public protest continue to be so surprisingly muted, as Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe pursue their test to destruction on the British economy? Why, after more than three years, during which every official forecast about the future level of unemployment, output and even (until very recently) inflation has been dismal, does this government not find itself in the process of being hounded out of office for having pursued the most consistently incompetent economic policy of any post-war British government?

This week's latest official figures for unemployment and for the overseas trading account pile up yet further evidence that the Thatcher economic experiment is leading to nowhere. In a kind of Darwinian nightmare, firms still in existence are certainly those with high survival capacity. But there is no sign of an upturn capable of recovering the tiniest fraction of output lost forever during this recession. And no evidence of any lasting improvement in the performance of the British economy as a whole. But still no storm of protest.

Part of the reason, clearly, is that the Left in this country has been so obsessed with its internal agenda during these years that it has had little time or energy to mount a serious and sustained attack on any part of this government's policy. But, more importantly, no-one has yet done an effective demolition job on the intellectual foundations of Thatcher economics. Common sense would seem enough for somebody to know that, with unemployment at 3¼ million (and still on a rising trend), a policy of further cutting demand for goods and services by deliberate government action is the economics of the madhouse. But the observed fact is that the government can claim that it has a rational economic policy, that it is on course and that 'there is no alternative' – and get away with it politically.

Most of such intellectual attack as there has been on the government's economic policy has concentrated on its 'doctrinaire monetarism'. In retrospect, this has been something of a red herring across the track of Thatcher economics. It is true that when putting herself through her crash course in public policy in preparation for the 1979 general election, Mrs Thatcher met and absorbed (with some tutoring from Sir Keith Joseph and in a half-baked form) the monetarist ideas of the economists Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. And it is true that in her speeches and interviews, the Prime Minister has continued to give the impression that monetarism matters.

But in practice the 'monetarist' record of this government has been technically very poor. The theory that Mrs Thatcher accepted was that the increase in the volume of money in any given period directly determines the rate of inflation after a time-lag that could vary, but was in the British case about 18 months. Measured by this theory Mrs Thatcher, Sir Geoffrey Howe and the Bank of England overshot by miles every operating target that could be set. And on this theory, given what was happening to the money supply in 1980-81, the inflation rate now should be running about the 18 per cent mark.

It is not. It is in single figures and falling, which Mrs Thatcher claims as a triumph. Whatever it is, it is not a triumph of monetary theory, which has been quietly buried everywhere except in the economics department of Liverpool University. It is purely and simply the result of the longest and most severe depression ever deliberately engineered by a British government.

Keynes's celebrated comment in his *General Theory* – 'Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist' – is absolutely applicable to Mrs Thatcher and her Chancellor of the Exchequer. But in their case the economist is neither Hayek nor Friedman. It is a Frenchman – of whom neither will probably have heard, certainly not read. He is Léon Walrus, who died in 1910 at the age of 76 and whose most influential work, *Elements of Pure Mathematics*, was seminal. It has had the most baneful influence on Anglo-Saxon economics and economic policy for the whole of this century.

For Walrus was not primarily concerned with policy, or the real world. He was concerned with a mathematical model. He was experimenting academically with a model for an economy in 'general equilibrium' under very particular assumptions – namely an assumption of an economy in which competition is so complete that no producer and no consumer can have any personal influence on prices. This interesting intellectual exercise is the foundation of neo-laisser faire economics of the Thatcher kind.

The trouble with the way in which Anglo-Saxon economics has been popularised is that, while the economists will correctly point out that the assumptions of 'perfect competition' are unrealistic, the lay public and politicians of the Right continue to assume that such a model provides a rough and ready approximation to the way in which the economy behaves.

In fact it does not. The urgent first priority of Labour economists is to demolish not just to their own satisfaction, but in a way that convinces the general public that the implicit assumptions of Mrs Thatcher's remarks about the money supply, about workers pricing themselves out of jobs, about the benefits of competition, about the need for incentives and the primacy of 'supply' over demand are all wholly without intellectual foundation.

After the economic traumas of the past ten years, economists and economic advisers have suffered a severe loss of political influence; and also of self-confidence. But nothing in past experience justifies the present government's defeatist attitude to the management of the domestic economy, namely an all pervading impression that it is subject to uncontrollable and scarcely predictable forces – like the weather. □

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Inside the 'Sigint' Empire

THE REVELATION, this week, of the intense American concern about the extent of Soviet espionage in Britain has again focused attention on GCHQ (Government Communications HQ), the electronic espionage headquarters in Cheltenham. The Americans, and in particular, the National Security Agency (NSA) which co-operates intimately with GCHQ, want to know what information is alleged to have been sent to the Russians by Geoffrey Prime, who faces trial on 29 November at the Old Bailey, accused of spying.

GCHQ is the largest of the British intelligence agencies, spending hundreds of millions of pounds every year on 'Sigint' – signals intelligence – the arcane name for the routine interception and analysis of much of the world's communications. Until 1976, its existence was scarcely known in public, and few comprehended its gigantic size. More than 6,000 people are employed at the Cheltenham HQ alone, according to recent reports.

The *New Statesman* has obtained, for the first time, a detailed organisational chart of GCHQ showing how the agency collects and disseminates intercepted communications to government departments and other intelligence agencies. It shows that Mr Prime worked within the most sensitive section of the organisation.

GCHQ is notionally part of the Foreign Office. But in fact it is quite independent, answering only to the Cabinet Office and the secret intelligence committee of top civil servants – the Permanent Secretaries' Committee, known by its code-letters PSIS. Only PSIS members – the Cabinet Secretary, Defence, Home Office, Foreign Office and Treasury Permanent Secretaries, and the Chief of the Defence Staff – know how much money the intelligence agencies actually spend. Their funds, as Sir Frank Cooper of the MoD has admitted before now, are 'laundered' through the defence and other budgets.

GCHQ is a senior partner in the four-nation signal intelligence gathering pacts known as 'BRUSA' (Britain-USA) and 'UKUSA'. These are secret agreements which date back to the late 1940s. As part of the agreements, Britain has UK Liaison Offices inside each of the four main participating agencies; the US's NSA, Australia's Defence Signals Division, and Canada's Communications Branch of the National Research Council. Each Liaison Office is headed by a senior GCHQ official, called SUKLO.

The top rank of GCHQ is the Directorate – consisting of the Director himself and six Superintending Directors. Each of the Directorate's four sections co-ordinates and supervises the activities of some 20 divisions and separate organisations within GCHQ. The divisions vary widely in size and importance, and are usually known by code-letters.

GCHQ's top-dog divisions are Z, J, K and H. These are the divisions which actually produce finished intelligence reports based on intercepted communications. J Division, to which Geoffrey Prime is believed to have been attached, is the most important, concentrating on 'Special' Sigint from Soviet Bloc countries. It is one of the largest in GCHQ.

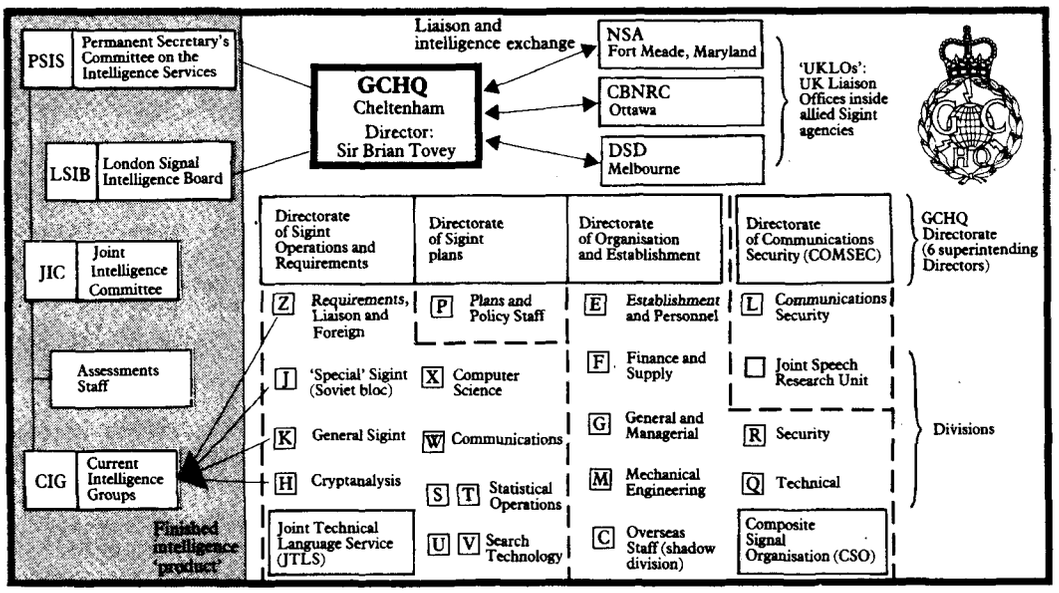
K Division deals with all other geographical areas, and also handles intercepted commercial messages. H Division contains the codebreakers, who try and unscramble enciphered signals. They are supported by X Division, who run one of Britain's biggest computer complexes in specially built huge halls overlooking Cheltenham.

Z Division is the GCHQ sales force, who obtain orders for its intelligence from the Defence Ministry, Foreign Office, and NATO and other governments. These requirements are turned into separate spying 'tasks' for the international network of monitoring stations, run by the Composite Signals Organisation (a public cover name for the spy station network). Geoffrey Prime worked for another organisation with a public cover title – the Joint Technical Language Service. Based in the City of London until a few years ago, this organisation provides translators for GCHQ and other agencies.

The primary customers for GCHQ are the intelligence officials in the Cabinet Office, who work for the Joint Intelligence Committee. Here, a string of 'Current Intelligence Groups' brings together intelligence from every source, even those as mundane as newspaper reports. The Groups produce daily and weekly bulletins of what's new in British intelligence-gathering.

Duncan Campbell

The organisational plan of Cheltenham GCHQ. Geoffrey Prime is believed to have been attached to division J which monitors intelligence from the Soviet bloc.



Rights blight in Belfast

BELFAST SOLICITORS are angry at the latest procedure introduced by the Crown in the current series of controversial court cases involving IRA supergrasses. A 60-strong solicitors' meeting has issued a statement claiming the use of a Bill of Indictment is an abuse of State power and has eroded the last remaining rights of defendants in Northern Ireland.

In the two most recent supergrass cases based on the evidence of Tyrone man Pat McGurk and Belfast man Christopher Black, the Director of Public Prosecutions has successfully applied to the High Court for a Bill of Indictment. This is a legal measure, invoked for the first time in Northern Ireland, which effectively does away with the usual preliminary enquiry stage in a magistrate's court. It is at this stage that witnesses for the prosecution are normally available for cross-examination, and magistrates can dismiss cases with flimsy evidence.

The two cases against nine and 38 defendants respectively are now going ahead without a preliminary hearing. The defendants can therefore expect to be held in prison on remand for about 18 months without any chance for their counsel to challenge the nature of the case against them. In the first case disturbances broke out in the public gallery of the magistrate's court when this unprecedented procedure was announced. Owen Carron MP and eight others including a solicitor are currently on bail charged with disorderly behaviour and assaulting the police. In the second case the four defence solicitors told the magistrate that their presence should not be construed as acceptance of the Crown's action.

The Criminal Bar Association of the Law Society of Northern Ireland has held emergency meetings to discuss the Bill of Indictment procedure which has been referred to the Law Society for urgent investigation. Solicitors claim that the Crown has misused the procedure which, they say, is intended to give the Crown the exceptional power to bring a case to trial if a magistrate perversely refuses to return it to trial or if a co-defendant has skipped bail and is re-arrested shortly before the trial date.

In these two instances this unusual step follows the collapse of two notable cases at the committal stage when the main prosecution witnesses refused to continue giving evidence following heckling and pressure from defendants and people in the gallery including their own relatives and friends.

Philip Sanders

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Youth vote for Sinn Fein

THE PEOPLE who appear to have been least surprised by the dramatic success of Provisional Sinn Fein in last week's Northern Ireland elections – apart from the Provos themselves – are Mr James Prior and his advisers. At the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton earlier this month Northern Ireland ministers were expecting Sinn Fein to win three, possibly four seats. In the event they took five and narrowly missed a sixth.

But in the British media, the entire Catholic community was suddenly perceived as positively endorsing the use of the bomb and bullet. This was in spite of the fact that the moderate Social, Democratic and Labour Party, fighting an impossibly difficult campaign with nothing to offer their own electorate, managed to increase their share of the vote.

The reasons for the Provos' successes are considerably more complex than any lurch towards the approval of violence by the Catholic community, though that, too, may follow if the present spate of sectarian killings continues. Sinn Fein's achievement was twofold. First, it mobilised a large traditional Republican vote which is always present but almost never expresses itself at the polls. Second, it galvanised the young, unemployed, alienated Catholics. It is the latter factor which represents a major threat to the SDLP in the future.

This was evident during the campaign itself. One Northern Ireland Office source told me 'the information we were getting all the time was that they were the only people really fighting the campaign'. On election day in West Belfast every polling booth had crowds of teenagers distributing leaflets for Sinn Fein, the same youngsters who night after night in the driving rain had plastered the run-down housing estates with posters for Gerry Adams and his running mate. There were caravans dispensing soup and coffee to the party workers and buses carrying voters to the polls. In purely political terms, the creation of a brilliantly efficient election machine by people starting from scratch with no experience of electoral politics was a considerable achievement. It raises questions about the future of the Provisionals and their role in Irish politics.

Their success in this election was quite different from the victories of Bobby Sands and Owen Carron, fought on the single emotive issue of the hunger strike and designed to exploit it to the full. This election was contested under the Sinn Fein label and the candidates were unequivocal in their support of the IRA.

Their success, though, was directly linked to the hunger strike and its after-effects. To that extent it is Mrs Thatcher who must be given the major part of the blame or credit for the election of Gerry Adams and his colleagues. It was her handling of the hunger strike, her determination to achieve a victory over the IRA even if it meant letting Bobby Sands and his fellow prisoners die, which gave the Provisionals the popular support in the Catholic community, particularly the young, on which they were able to build towards last week's successes. **Mary Holland**

Left losses

JOHN GOLDING, the leader of the right wing trade union bloc vote which now dominates Labour Party affairs, asserted his authority over Michael Foot's leadership at the first Labour National Executive meeting since party conference. Few had expected the Right to make their implicit majority so explicit.

Since the elections for the new NEC at party conference the Right could claim 15 votes, a majority of one over the soft and hard Left on the 29-strong NEC. Golding used that majority to overturn Jim Mortimer's suggestions for who should sit on the various sub-committees. Through a series of Golding's amendments, the Right now have a 12-10 majority on the Home Policy Committee, a 13-9 majority on the Organisation Committee, an 8-6 majority on the Youth Committee, an 11-9 majority on the International Committee and a 12-6 majority on the publicity committee. Mr Mortimer's proposed list would have allowed Footites to ally with the hard Left on key committees. **Patrick Wintour**

MISCELLANY

Arthur's cross

'Hijack by the Left' screamed the front page of the London evening paper *The Standard* on Wednesday. Arthur Lewis MP had failed to be reselected for the Labour candidacy in Newham North-West, London, a seat he has held since 1945. The paper accepted without challenge Lewis's picture of himself as a loyal, hard-working MP who had been ousted by 'the Militants slipping in almost unnoticed'. Lewis's attack appeared just one day before this week's crucial by-election. Otherwise he would not be true front page material – his idiosyncratic behaviour having been a cause of some embarrassment to his local party in recent years. For instance, he commented this summer: 'We need far more severe sentencing. People should be kept in prison far longer,' adding 'Let us get back to the 1930s.' Mr Lewis has held just five constituency surgeries since the 1979 election. He has attended only two meetings of his local Labour Party this year. He lives in Norfolk, and refuses to give even the constituency secretary his address there. In October 1978 two local ward branches called on him to retire. He promised that he would not seek to stand again once he reached the age of 65. Mr Lewis's bid for reselection follows his 65th birthday.

Big Brother gets rich

Some consortia are already making their opening moves in the forthcoming cable television free-for-all. Enter Solent Cablevision, which sent out a press release last week announcing its intention of competing for the Portsmouth area franchise. The company, which envisages a possible 100 channels, has listed four directors, one of whom is John Russell. Mr Russell is also managing director of the local 'independent' radio station, Radio Victory. The consortium's bid is also supported by the local newspaper group, Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers plc. After the free-for-all which the Hunt committee let loose we may then have the monopolisation of the channels of information, about which the Hunt committee was so very reticent.

Loose-End

Supporters of END – European Nuclear Disarmament – are wrestling with the familiar problem of how a campaigning body should be organised. Should it go for efficiency and political unity or democracy and open involvement? Having survived so far on enthusiasm and goodwill, there is now a difference between those who feel END should have a proper organisational structure of its own, and those who want to stick with the loose network and reliance on consensus of its early days. Last Saturday supporters met in London to discuss a constitution. Proposals to turn the Co-ordinating Committee into a more powerful 'policy-making body of END' were put forward by founder member Dan Smith, on behalf of the existing Co-ordinating Committee. An alternative view has come from T&GWU Chairman Walt Greendale and Tony Topham of the Institute of Workers Control. They proposed an amendment saying the Co-ordinating Committee should be no more than a forum for debate. Their position follows an open letter published by Ken Coates, also of the IWC, in which he expressed his fears that the Co-ordinating Committee was too London-centred and had not published the unwelcome facts such as Solidarnosc's refusal to publish the original END appeal in Polish. The Co-ordinating Committee has now been asked to produce a revised draft constitution for further discussion at the Spring Supporters' Conference.

Dissimulated war news

Residents of large swathes of Northumbria and Cumbria steeled themselves last week for Mallet Blow – a simulated war laid on by the Ministry of Defence in which, said the Ministry, 'up to 150 aircraft' would be involved in attacking pretend Red Army units in the North of England. They were not prepared for the ear-shattering reality. Documents which have fallen into the *New Statesman*'s capacious MoD files show that more than 600 low-flying attacks were planned by British and American aircraft, including some of the nuclear F-111 aircraft from the US bases at Lakenheath and Upper Heyford. Between 8am and 4pm every day, the documents show, an attack was scheduled at a height of 250 feet on average every three minutes. On top of this terrifying din several squadrons of defending aircraft intercepted the attackers and engaged in mock dog-fights. To make the exercise seem real, one squadron of US aircraft based at Alconbury near Huntingdon was painted to resemble USSR fighters, attacking aircraft had to fly over a British and American electronic warfare base at Spadeadam in Cumbria (where simulated Soviet radar and anti-aircraft missiles have been installed) and RAF Canberra aircraft jammed the attacking aircraft's communications. This sort of simulated war is perfectly acceptable – unlike the broadcast of simulated war which, as we reported last week, almost got a Sheffield journalist the sack.

Sun's spark

The expulsion of *Sun* leader 'writer' Ronald Spark from the National Union of Journalists, as a result of his over-enthusiastic endorsement of our boys and even more enthusiastic denigration of the *Daily Mirror* and *Newsnight*'s Peter Snow, does not represent the first time that Mr Spark has made Fleet Street history. He had earlier been an employee of the *Sunday Express*, which he left after a disagreement with management over his expenses claims. *Sun* journalists, among the best paid in the country, have decided to ignore the NUJ executive's decision to expel Spark for breaking the union's code of conduct. This is despite the fact that the journalists have an informal closed shop agreement. The *Sun* scribes are arguing that all journalists must be members of the NUJ at the time they join the paper. What happens afterwards, once they are in the clutches of News International, is a different matter. In its first try-out then, the NUJ's code of conduct has failed.

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War, peace or truth games

THE INDEPENDENT Broadcasting Authority says that there is 'some doubt' over whether or not it will allow Central TV to go ahead and transmit a new 90-minute documentary by John Pilger on nuclear weapons, planned to be shown in three weeks' time. Central TV officials fear that the IBA's actions may create a row to equal the controversy, nearly 17 years ago, when the BBC banned Peter Watkins' documentary, *The War Game*. It has never been shown on TV.

The Central TV documentary – called *The Truth Game* – examines the way in which Western governments have become committed to nuclear deterrence, and is strongly critical of government propaganda which is intended to undermine disarmament moves. This is particularly ironic in view of the IBA's attitude, since it was revealed this week that the Ministry of Defence has just finished preparing its own, government-funded, propaganda film on the nuclear arms race. The MoD film, predictably, is called *The Peace Game* and was shown to journalists for the first time this Thursday.

The IBA's Director of Television, Colin Shaw, told the *New Statesman* this week that the Central TV film was a 'personal view' by John Pilger 'on an issue of considerable political sensitivity'. After receiving details of the film earlier this month, the IBA intervened to stop the *TV Times* magazine featuring the programme as its cover story. The IBA didn't want to prejudge the issue, said Mr Shaw, but 'here was a programme whose future was in some doubt'.

The Truth Game will now have to be seen by the entire Board of the IBA, a rare event. The screening should already have taken place, but has now been put back to next Thursday. The IBA officials who normally check the contents of programmes in advance said that they were not willing to take the decision themselves. Previous films made by the same team featuring Pilger's 'personal view' of such matters as the atrocities of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia – 'Year Zero' – did not require this kind of special screening. *The Truth Game* is different, say the IBA, because it deals with a 'political controversy' over the activities of the British government.

Even if the IBA Board now pass the film, which is presently scheduled for 23 November, they have already ensured a diminished impact by blocking coverage in *TV Times*, said producer David Munro. Central TV's Managing Director, Charles Denton, added that 'our obvious concern now is that the Authority will say that the film can't go out at all'.

Duncan Campbell

Deported to violence

THE FAILURE to give black women who are resident in Britain but not British citizens the same rights as men under the immigration rules will be especially bad news for women who are the victims of their husbands' violence.

Halimat Babamba is a 25-year-old Nigerian woman who lives in Leeds. She has a job, two children under the age of four, and a visa that runs out on 31 October. After that she risks deportation to Nigeria where she would face an extremely violent husband and separation from her children.

Halimat came to England in 1980 to join her husband, Hussein Bello Babamba, then studying at Leeds Polytechnic. Throughout their marriage Hussein had been violent to Halimat, and this continued while they lived in Leeds. He threatened to kill her on several occasions and to take away the children. By August 1982 Halimat was living with eight-month-old Mustafa and three-and-a-half-year-old Hakeem in a Women's Aid refuge.

Hussein went back to Nigeria and set about securing the return of Halimat and the children. Where parents are separated Nigerian law gives the father automatic custody of children over six years old. Halimat fears her husband can influence the courts to obtain the children before then. She says: 'There is no life for me in Nigeria. I want to stay here with my children, to stay safe from this violence.'

An application for extended stay was turned down by the Home Office earlier this year. The case is due to go on appeal before an Independent Adjudicator. If this fails – and the grounds are purely compassionate – then it's the Immigration Appeals Tribunal, final official ditch, for Halimat.

Nigel Pollitt

County Sound's prospects

THE COUNTY SOUND, the group which won the Guildford area independent local radio franchise (see *New Statesman* 22 October), has stipulated a minimum shareholding of £500 in its current share offer. It is trying to raise £710,000 in ordinary share capital.

Even for such a well-heeled place as Guildford, £500 is the kind of sum which average townspeople are likely to find prohibitive. This arrangement therefore diminishes the prospect of a broad ownership, and breaks promises made by the company itself at the time of the franchise allocation, when it pledged itself to attract support from 'all types of people throughout the area'. The limit also conflicts with IBA policy, which is to encourage as wide a cross-section of shareholders as possible.

One County Sound director told the *New Statesman* that the £500 limit had been set to minimise administrative costs. Most observers feel that the advantages of a genuinely democratic base would have outweighed the minor additional costs of operating a larger share register. A member of one of County Sound's consultative committees commented that she thought the sum 'an awful lot' and would be raising the matter at the next meeting. Two other franchise applicant groups, Radio Weald and Radio Surrey, had been planning minimum allocations of £100, specifically in order to attract a diffuse ownership.

A respected local journalist told the *NS* that 'they are clearly trying to restrict shareholders to people who won't cause trouble'. The IBA confirmed that 'we have the final approval of a company's board and shareholding, and can suggest alterations'. They did not comment on another curious point in the County Sound prospectus – its claim that the company has been awarded '*exclusive* rights within the franchise area to provide programmes (including advertisements) for transmission by the IBA'. In fact, the IBA specifications make it perfectly clear that exclusive rights are not granted.

Bob Woffinden

Televised pay claims

THOSE WATCHING the exchange between Arthur Scargill, Andrew Neild of the *Economist* and Richard Lindley, the presenter of BBC's new *Saturday Briefing*, might well have been bewildered by the mass of conflicting statistics presented by all sides on the miners' pay claim.

The presenter, Lindley, started the programme by saying that:

> The official figures show that only 10 per cent of miners are now earning less than £110 a week, that another 10 per cent get over £240 a week and that the average weekly earnings of miners working underground is £181.50

Lindley's reading of the New Earnings Survey was wrong on three counts. Only 10 per cent of *surface* workers earn less than £110 a week. Similarly, it is only 10 per cent of *underground* workers who earn over £240 a week. And the average weekly earnings of manual miners working underground are not £181 but £186.70. Lindley then went on to say that the miners' wage claim would represent a 35 per cent increase. In fact it would be worth 31 per cent. Rather gingerly, Lindley pressed on. He said

next: 'The figures I've quoted, I think, are for a 40.5 hour week which already includes some overtime.' But only underground workers do as little overtime as Lindley said. Surface workers – about a quarter of the mining workforce – do an average 45.8 hour week.

Mr Scargill was more skilful in his use of statistics, if equally misleading. He concentrated on the basic wage of the lowest grade surface worker which, as Scargill said, is £87.80. However, there are six grades of surface worker: the highest grade receives £103 basic. In addition surface workers receive on average a £17 weekly productivity bonus and overtime payments that are, on average again, £30 a week. The average weekly earnings of a male manual surface worker is £153.80, according to the New Earnings Survey. Scargill believes the Survey is plain wrong.

The programme then moved on to the long-term trend in miners' earnings. Scargill repeated his assertion that miners had, since 1975, lost 45 per cent of their purchasing power on grade rates. But this ignores the effects of the 1978 productivity deal on miners' earnings. Where prior to 1978, 80 per cent of miners' earnings came from the basic rate, nowadays only two-thirds does. If one includes the rise in productivity payments, miners' purchasing power has not dropped back since 1975. Scargill omits the productivity payments from his calculation because he says the Board had promised that the payments would be self-financing.

Lindley – who throughout displayed a random ability to get it wrong – finally asserted: 'You're 40 per cent ahead of inflation over the last 10 years.' But, according to the Coal Board, miners' earnings have risen by 393 per cent since 1972 in which time the retail price index has risen by 275 per cent. This means miners are 30 per cent ahead of inflation. Lindley's starting date of 1972 also distorts matters. It is the year of the big rise after the Wilberforce Inquiry.

Patrick Wintour

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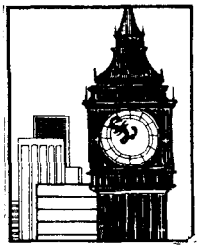

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Can Labour win the next election?

ONE OF THE more outrageous claims that SDP leaders have made in recent weeks is that the Labour vote is crumbling. Depressingly low it may be, but crumbling it is not. In fact, for the past 12 months it has never ventured far from the 30 per cent mark, while support for the Conservatives and for the Liberal/SDP Alliance has veered between the low twenties and the high forties.

Thirty per cent is nowhere near enough to win the next general election, however. Labour's decline since 1979 will be emphasised by the Peckham and Northfield by-elections, which occur after this week's *New Statesman* goes to press. Even if Labour has retaken Northfield, and marks up its first by-election gain since it won Bromsgrove eleven years ago, it is certain to fall short of the 6,000 majority which it needs to indicate that voters nationally would want a Labour government.

At the risk of piling gloom upon gloom (or, just possibly, spoiling John Spellar's victory party), it is worth surveying the mountain Labour must climb between now and the next general election. In 1979 Labour won 268 seats. The party's starting point for the next election will be lower than that. Quite apart from regaining the seats hijacked by SDP defectors, the next election will be fought on new boundaries.

It has been known for some time that the new boundaries will harm Labour and help the Tories; but until now it has been possible only to guess by how much. Cities, with declining populations and mainly Labour MPs, will lose seats; while suburbs and some non-metropolitan counties, with expanding populations and mainly Tory MPs, will gain seats. (A small additional hurdle is that the number of Ulster seats is being raised from 12 to 17: that change alone would have deprived Labour of its overall majorities in 1964 and October 1974.)

Although the work of the Boundary Commissioners is not quite complete, it is now possible to put some reasonably precise figures to the effect of the changes. The final outcome may alter the following figures a little, but not by enough to change the main conclusions to be drawn.

IN ORDER TO estimate the effects of the boundary changes, the BBC, ITN and the Press Association have pooled resources to 're-run' the 1979 election as if it had been held on the new boundaries. They have employed various computers, psephologists and sundry number-crunchers, who are drawing up a ward-by-ward picture of political loyalties throughout Britain. Professor Ivor Crewe of Essex University has examined almost 300 new constituencies on this basis. These seats cover most of urban England – where Labour's 'lost' seats are mostly located.

According to Professor Crewe, Labour would have lost about 12 further seats to the Conservatives if the 1979 election had been fought on the new boundaries. In addition, it now looks as if the new House of Commons will contain 650 MPs, compared with the present 635: ten extra seats in Britain, five in Ulster. The ten extra British seats would also have gone to the Tories. Assuming minor party representation to be unaltered (the best assumption we can make until the Welsh and Scottish calculations are done), this is roughly how the 1979 election would have worked out, compared with the way it actually did:

	Actual result	'New boundaries' result
CON	339	361
LAB	268	256
LIB	11	11
Welsh/Scot Nats	4	4
Ulster	12	17
Speaker	1	1

Under the existing boundaries 318 seats are needed for an overall majority; Labour is 50 short of that target. Under the new boundaries, 326 seats will be needed – and Labour would be 70 short.

(That excludes the 'SDP' seats that Labour needs to regain. Add these in, and Labour needs to capture or recapture about 100 seats at the next election. Only if the SDP is virtually obliterated as a parliamentary force, is a Labour victory remotely possible. For the sake of this analysis, and to avoid a note of near-suicidal depression, I am assuming that happens.)

Can Labour gain 70 seats from the Tories? It is more than any party has gained at any election for more than 30 years. Moreover, there are now fewer marginals than there used to be. In the 1950s, 18 seats would change hands on a one per cent swing; today only 11 seats change hands.* So to gain 70 seats, Labour needs a swing of about 6½ per cent – that is, it must convert the Conservative lead of seven points in 1979 to a Labour lead of six points. Labour has achieved this in only two past General Elections: 1945 and 1966.

Labour will even have some difficulty becoming the largest party, and forming a minority government. On present boundaries it could achieve this (as it did in February 1974), even if the Conservatives had a narrow lead in votes cast. Under the new boundaries, Labour would need to take 53 Tory seats. This would require a five per cent swing, or a three-point Labour lead.

IT IS POSSIBLE that these calculations are a little too gloomy. For example, if the Labour vote holds up better in marginal seats than elsewhere (and the Tory vote in those seats crumbles more to the Alliance), Labour might find it easier to win seats than these figures suggest. But the opposite could just as easily happen – Labour might find it even harder going in the marginals than elsewhere. The party cannot afford to lower its sights below a three-point lead to become the largest party, or a six-point lead for outright victory.

This ought to be well within Labour's grasp, given the chronic failure of Mrs Thatcher's policies. It means Labour adding about ten points to its 30 per cent baseline support (assuming the Alliance attracts around 25 per cent support at the general election). Recent evidence from MORI's monthly surveys suggests where Labour's problems – and hopes – reside.

Of all the main demographic groups, Labour has lost most ground since 1979 among trade union members. At the last election union members voted: Labour 51 per cent, Conservative 33, Liberal 13. MORI's latest figure for union members is: Labour 37, Conservative 34, Alliance 27. This 14-point Labour loss is almost three times the national average.

Among union members, it is white-collar workers who have deserted Labour most: a narrow Tory lead within this group in 1979 has become a two-to-one lead today – with Labour trailing in third place. What is more, during the past three months, white-collar union members have moved further away from Labour, while blue-collar workers have started to return to the fold. A preliminary guess is that white-collar workers, 80 per cent of whom are home-owners, have been swayed by the recent mortgage rate cuts.

There may be – almost certainly are – more complex forces at work. My central point, though, is that now we are entering a pre-election phase, it is time for Mr Foot and his colleagues to step outside the world of grand gestures and examine the minute, and often grubby, detail of assembling a coalition of Labour votes sufficiently large to win the next election. I believe it can be done; but it involves confronting some unpleasant truths and making some awkward choices. But better to do it now, than in 18 months time, in a post-mortem on a general election defeat. □

*A detailed analysis of this phenomenon, and an assessment of possible reasons, appears in the July 1982 issue of the *British Journal of Political Studies*, in an article by John Curtice and Michael Steed.

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Great Britain Incorporated

In order to sell off our assets to private owners, the government has had to engage in very questionable adjustments to the balance sheets. David Philip provides a guide

THIS GOVERNMENT's increasingly frantic determination to sell off every nationalised industry capable of being got to the marketplace is now quite apparent. The programme has already embraced British Aerospace and state holdings in Cable & Wireless and Amersham International. More far-reaching plans are now in hand for the disposal of Britoil, major divisions of the British Gas Corporation, British Shipbuilders, British Telecom, the British National Docks Board, National Bus Company, British Rail Engineering, Sealink and British Airways. Where the finances or particular character of a given nationalised industries have made it unacceptable to the stock market, the government has adopted a simple remedy – to pump in sufficient cash until it cannot fail to float upon the market. The real economic costs of this ideological policy will be disastrous.

Most immediate and dramatic is the government's plan to sell 51 per cent of the shares of Britoil on the London stock market by the end of November. Britoil was better known as the British National Oil Corporation (BNOC). It was set up by Tony Benn as Energy Minister in 1976 to create an instrument for protection of the British national interest in an oil market dominated by multinational corporations. It was designed to protect Britain's interest in the continued development, production and supply of North Sea oil. To do this BNOC was granted automatic rights to participate in production ventures and to take and market 51 per cent of all North Sea oil.

Lawson assesses the prizes in Sale of the Century

Even on the admission of Energy Secretary Nigel Lawson, Britoil was a highly efficient and successful operation. Pre-tax profits in 1979 were £97 million, in 1980 £309 million in 1981 £438 million. Over 75 per cent of these profits went straight into the Treasury as taxes and levies. (To put this into context, £400 million would be sufficient to increase the pay offer to the health workers to 15 per cent and £1,000 million is equivalent to the revenue raised by a 1p. increase in basic rate of income tax.)

Disregarding this enviable track record, the government set about weakening BNOC's position. It was made to abandon its right to 51 per cent of all North Sea liquified petroleum gas production (estimated value by 1983 – £100 million).

In addition the 12½ per cent royalty on North Sea production paid by other oil producers to the government was changed to a cash payment, instead of being handed over as crude oil to BNOC, thus reducing its effective control over 63½ per cent of North Sea output. BNOC was then itself made liable to Petroleum Revenue Tax and lost its automatic right to take stakes in other operators' developments.

Having deliberately undercut BNOC's position, Lawson now revealed his strategy. The Oil and Gas (Enterprise) Act 1982 gave him the exclusive right to control the manner and timing of the sale of Britoil without further parliamentary approval. The Act divided the profitable development and production activities of BNOC from its non-profit making oil trading division. Exploration, development and production interests were then hived off into the new company, Britoil. BNOC itself was left with the marketing rump. Oil marketing had never been profit making for BNOC. Its objective here was simply to have a strong position to influence prices to maintain the economic value of North Sea oil. The unprofitable rump could now be left as a sitting target for critics of unprofitable state ownership. Britain's strategic national stake in the ownership of North Sea oil would just be allowed to disappear.

BNOC's board resisted this programme of privatisation from the first. Two chairmen had to be replaced before Philip Shelbourne, the present incumbent and a firm supporter of privatisation, was able to muster any management support. Even then the board voted unanimously against splitting off Britoil. The management argued that Britoil could never function effectively without an oil trading division and that the national interest was poorly served by reducing BNOC to virtual impotence.

The board was duly overruled by the Minister and on 1 August Britoil was split off. Britoil owns part of six producing North Sea oil fields – Beatrice, Thistle, Dunlin, Murchison, Ninian and Statjford. It has stakes in two new fields, Brae and Hilton, due to come onstream in 1983 and 1984 respectively; and owns 51 per cent of the Clyde field, due to produce in 1987. These and other interests in gas fields and exploration give Britoil an estimated asset value of between £1.8 and £2.0 billion. The government had hoped to raise at least £1 billion from its sale of 51 per cent of the shares in Britoil. Since that estimate was first issued last year, the figures have had to be revised downwards several times. Some analysts now believe that the government will be lucky to raise even £450 million from the sale. The long-term value of Britoil's assets has not diminished, so what has happened?

A MAJOR FACTOR has been the slump in world oil prices. In London, oil company shares prices have fallen 50 per cent in the last 18 months. One recent new oil share issue in the United States had to be offered at a discount of 55 per cent.

On those figures, Britoil's £2 billion worth of assets are reduced to £900 million in the eyes of the market. Selling 51 per cent of that would only produce £450 million. Oil share prices are cyclical. By selling in the trough of the market this autumn, the government will be throwing away between £200-300 million. Originally, Nigel Lawson agreed to postpone the sale, if market conditions were wrong. Even Shelbourne, the government's chosen agent is thought to be against a sale on these terms. But the government has not allowed the time table to slip by one day.

The cost of this unseemly haste is not the only burden which the taxpayer is being asked to shoulder. In addition to paying taxes, BNOC also financed the National Oil

lead[1] (led), n., & v.t. & i. **1.** Heavy easily fusible soft malleable base metal of dull pale bluish-grey colour. **– and it can kill.**

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Account – a fund which the Treasury could draw on in anticipation of future oil revenues. Such heavy drawings were in fact made on BNOC that it was forced to borrow £188 million from other government sources to balance its books. At first the government seemed determined to recover all of this £188 million. The Britoil balance sheet was to be redrawn to disguise the extent of the National Oil Account debt. The increasingly resistant board of Britoil refused to accept this. If Britoil was required to go private, the level of this debt would be completely unacceptable to the stock market. It would make Britoil's current liabilities exceed its current assets, making it technically insolvent. A widely leaked memo from the Britoil board to Lawson called the proposed balance sheet 'totally meaningless'.

Lawson had to move rapidly to assuage City concern that it was being sold an unsound company. The final cost of reshaping Britoil's balance sheet – a company which performed successfully and profitably as a nationalised industry – is not yet confirmed. However Dr Gordon Brown, the Scottish Labour Party's vice-chairman, has received leaked papers indicating that the government has agreed to write off £127 million of Britoil's National Oil Account debt. Furthermore Britoil is apparently to receive £80 million which should have gone to the Exchequer by way of a cash grant and to be allowed to retain £219 million of BNOC's 1981/2 pre-tax profits. By virtue of a change in Britoil's accounting policies, it will be allowed to defer paying Corporation Tax on these profits – possibly indefinitely. The total cost to the Treasury of such a reconstruction exercise would be £426m.

Britoil's past commercial success has at least limited the real cost of privatisation. The British Gas Corporation has not been so fortunate. It has just been forced to offer for sale its half share in Britain's largest onshore oil field, Wytch Farm. BGC, like its partner BP has valued its interest at £450 million. The Department of Energy, desperate to find a buyer, are trying to force BGC to accept a considerably lower price.

British Telecom is an even more grotesque example of the effects of this scandalous policy. BT is such a large company that it will have to be sold off in series of small instalments, to avoid completely overburdening the stock market's buying capacity. Before any of it can be sold, however, the whole of the balance sheet will have to be reconstructed. This will require the government to write off, probably within the next year, a large part of BT's £3,500 million of debt due to the Treasury. The government will also have to make up the present shortfall in BT's pension fund of £1,200 million. It will be several years, if ever, before the government is able to recover this expenditure out of what it gets for selling British Telecom.

The single most deliberately expensive act of privatisation will be the sale of British Airways. BA actually makes a small trading profit, but it has chosen in the current year to charge its profit and loss account with the total depreciation of a large part of its existing aircraft fleet. The result has been a final accounted deficit for the year of £544 million. This means that next year hardly any depreciation will have to be charged in the accounts. Thus BA can be sold off next year, apparently as a profitable organisation (assuming the air travel market doesn't collapse again). This year's extraordinary loss, BA's government guaranteed debts of £1 billion and its own pension fund deficiency will all have to be paid off by the Treasury before the sale. One reliable estimate puts the total cost at £1 billion against income arising from the sale of at most £300m.

THE REQUIREMENTS of balance sheet adjustments were bad enough. On top the arcane definition of the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) has its own peculiar demands. Nationalised industry borrowings count as part of the PSBR, by definition. By arbitrary Treasury ruling, they can only be treated as being outside PSBR, if at least 51 per cent of the shares in the industry have been sold. Therefore, in order to reduce the PSBR, a majority shareholding in Britoil must be sold. To protect Britoil from overseas predators, cumbersome and legally questionable provisions have been devised to give to the government a veto over certain of Britoil's affairs. This is notwithstanding the fact that the government will only then retain a minority stake.

If past experience is any guide, even the mechanics of the Britoil sale will cost the Treasury money. New share issues are made either by way of a tender – an auction where the issue is sold at the highest price at which all the shares will be taken up – or by fixed price offer – where underwriters settle a price in advance for offer to all comers and guarantee to take up themselves any not sold. A tender sale raises more money, but it is less open to small individual share buyers. In the past, with privatisation issues (and there is little reason to assume a change of government view this time) fixed price issues have been made. This again reflects the government's ideological concern to serve the interests of the share-buying public, at the expense of the tax-paying public. To ensure a successful launch, fixed price issues are always set at a slight discount. In the weak market for oil shares and with the threat of future renationalisation by Labour in the offing, this time the discount may have to be substantial.

The government is lured to such destructive acts out of more than commercial ideology. If the economy remains out of control, dramatic action to 'roll back the frontiers of the state' may steal the limelight. Unemployment cannot be cut by legislation, but privatisation can be achieved. Even recently cabinet ministers were talking about issuing bonds to raise capital for state enterprise. This would have required none of the expensive rejigging of balance sheets as such bonds would have carried a full government guarantee.

But the government, faced with failed economic policies, now requires grand gestures, regardless of their likely consequences. The result is likely to be a further gaping shortfall in Treasury finances – and national assets squandered. □

BY-ELECTIONS

Left, right, left . . .

Vincent Hanna follows the trail of two contrasting Labour campaigns – left-wing in safe, run-down, racially-mixed Peckham; right-wing in marginal, tidy, recently-prosperous, white Northfield

IT IS RAINING in Peckham, at least I think it is, for Peckham is one of those places where it always seems to be raining. There is a 9 o'clock press conference in the T&GWU office in Camberwell Church Street. At 9.10 the candidate sits in a small back office with her press officer, Francis Beckett, and three 'supervisors' from Peckham CLP. This is to ensure that the morning papers are interpreted with the right note of doctrinal purity. They are called Penny, Jeremy and Ralph, and have assumed a role akin to political commissars in the campaign.

They view Mr Beckett with deep suspicion. For that matter they view Ms Harman and most visitors with deep suspicion. Ms Harman was selected as Labour candidate for Peckham last August by a majority of two over Chris Mullin, the hard-left editor of *Tribune*. She won on a coalition of soft-left and right-wing votes.

Since then there have been changes in the GMC and such soft-left and right-wingers that remain tend to keep a low profile. A GMC member explains: 'Harriet is seen as middle-class, the sort of person who gets married and has children, and wants to be a Cabinet Minister. That sort of thing doesn't go down well in the party.'

This morning Penny, Jeremy and Ralph are anxious lest the candidate falls under the sway of Roy Hattersley who is the visiting MP. Much debate occurs in the back office. The press conference lasts 12 minutes during which time any attempts to bring up Militant or ancilliary issues are skilfully diverted by the candidate.

After this Glenys Thornton, the candidate's 'minder', bounds through the door and cries 'it's time to go'. Ms Thornton, a beaming person with nerves of steel, is political secretary to the Royal Arsenal Co-op and a person of some influence in South London politics. She is a natty dresser. (So for that matter are Ms Harman, her husband Jack Dromey and Mr Beckett. It's the best dressed Labour campaign I have covered.)

Ms Thornton carries a large bag containing everything from Mars bars to blood

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transfusion equipment. We pile into a campaign wagon which is large, cumbersome and noisy and speed through damp, decaying, council estates with boarded-up windows to canvass some old people.

They peer uneasily from their windows, thankful for someone safe to talk to about the lack of repairs, or the muggings, or the awful doings of Ken Livingstone and 'that fellow Peter Satchell' (sic). Canvassing here is hard, slow work and if Ms Harman does not look wholly at ease, it is probably because she has hardly ever done anything like this before.

Meanwhile, Ms Thornton, the minder, is bounding from door to door, beaming like a searchlight. She is not uneasy. 'This is Harriet's photo.' 'Ooh isn't she nice!' 'Yes, she's *very* nice, really she is.' 'Some activists have a problem in canvassing,' she says, 'they have no experience of preaching to the unconverted, and when they knock on a door and find themselves being abused by a voter their instinctive reaction is to turn round and move a vote of censure on the heretic.'

The Labour campaign has done well in canvassing the black community and Harriet Harman has been welcomed warmly in the local clubs. But many of the older white Labour voters are unhappy about blacks and say so. It's an issue which Ms Harman finds difficult to confront. We visit Harmon House which is owned by the Corporation of the City of London and where old people from nearby estates can have a cheap lunch.

The tables are filled with old people eating sausages and mash. Ms Harman moves among them smiling and patting. The message they give her is consistent. Why don't the council do something about the mugging, or the repairs, or what about this left-wing stuff that's going on. Ms Harman remains non-committal, but then how can she do otherwise?

We zoom to a school near the Kinglake estate and pass Bethersden House, a ruinous looking building with empty, boarded-up windows. 'I wouldn't sodding well vote Labour if I lived there,' one of the canvassers says.

There is a frantic half hour outside the school where Ms Harman looks much happier in a flood of young shouting faces. She covers them with Labour stickers, and cheerfully brushes them off the loudspeaker van where they are singing 'Pass the Duchy' as if to wake the dead.

Peckham is ripe for the sort of community politics which the Liberals have practised well in Liverpool, and in Tower Hamlets. There are thousands of votes to be won by agitating about things like house repairs, or street lighting. Harriet Harman can count herself lucky that the SDP/Alliance challenge has come from a stranger to the area with only ten locally based helpers. That Dick Taverne could even save his deposit in this traditional Labour stronghold reflects badly on the state of the Labour Party in South London.

TO NORTHFIELD – and to a trim council estate on a hill above the Longbridge works. 'John's our candidate. I'm sure you'll vote for him. He's a good moderate.'

PA

The sort of people who have children and want to be Cabinet Ministers

It is John Golding speaking – a man who knows a good moderate when he sees one. He is joined in this canvassing exercise by . . . yes . . . Roy Hattersley who tries to be seen at all by-elections – and everywhere else, whirling furiously and shaking hands.

He knocks at number 41. 'Hello, perhaps you recognise me?' 'Oh yes', peers out an old man from his porch. 'I've seen you on the telly, you're . . .' 'I'm the Labour Party,' interrupts Roy, 'and I hope you'll be voting Labour on the 28th.' 'The party isn't what it was, you know, the best man you ever had was Mr Powell.' 'But you'll be voting for us anyway,' insists a puzzled Mr Hattersley. 'Definitely; Winston Churchill promised us homes fit for heroes, and he never did it, did he?'

A dazed Shadow Home Secretary chalks one up for John Spellar, and leaves for London. Up the road the candidate is getting a warm response from such elderly council tenants as are at home at 2.30p.m. on a Thursday. A retired nurse shows her contempt for the Prime Minister. She seizes John Spellar's arm and tells him that she would, if possible, like to have the chance to 'stick a needle in her bum'.

Northfield has 38,000 doors to knock, half of them council-owned and the council tenants live in paradise compared with Peckham. The streets are wide and well lit, there are many trees, well appointed schools and a low crime rate. There used to be an air of smug complacency in the constituency with steady jobs at Longbridge or in the Cadbury factory at Bournville. If Labour is to survive it must easily take seats like Northfield. Labour should have won it hands down, especially as local unemployment has more than trebled from 2,700 in 1979 to over 9,300 now and meanwhile the Longbridge workforce has halved.

John Spellar is 35, educated at Dulwich College and Oxford and works for Frank Chapple at the EEPTU as Head of Research. He has moulded himself on his master's image with startlingly similar features, and accent. When he says or thinks something unpleasant, he laughs noisily. He seems to laugh quite a lot. He is a hard right-winger in the John Golding mould, anti-CND, pro-EEC, in favour of selling council houses to tenants and concerned constantly to fight Militants, Bennites and other leftist groups. 'My speech at Blackpool was very useful. "Spellar zaps Trots!" Can't be a bad headline anywhere these days,' he laughs loudly.

I followed him around the Longbridge ward for an afternoon, as he attempted to get commitments from passing voters. 'What about your Tony Benns then?' comes the question from all sides (in Northfield as much as in Peckham). 'Don't worry mate,' cries Spellar, 'we've sorted them out. They've no chance now. This is going to be the old strong Labour Party.' He repeats it again and again. A man asks about Banning the Bomb. Spellar does not equivocate, he rarely does. 'The left worked at changing conference decisions when it suited them. I'll be fighting to change this one.'

His headquarters are in a former butcher's shop just off (I swear) Long Nuke Road and I have been told many jokes about blood on the floor which I shall spare you. The candidate, who lives in a sort of hut at the back, is managed by Dick Knowles, a retired party agent of much cunning and charm, and Monica Foot from Walworth Road as press officer who is trying, under circumstances made difficult by the fact that she dislikes her candidate, to create as much publicity in Northfield as her friend Francis Beckett is attempting to suppress in Peckham. Psephologists and pollsters crawl all over the constituency. 'It's a matter of making noises here,' says Dick Knowles. 'Bright colours, leaflets, banging on doors, not many meetings and drag them out on the day. Here we're counting on the folk memories of unemployment.'

MY ABIDING memory of both campaigns is one of party style. At Peckham and Northfield they have candidates who mesh with the ideological bent of the GMC. And why not, one might add. But that is not always appreciated by Labour *voters*. I have the odd impression that Labour might have done better if Spellar and Harman had done a swap. Northfield could have warmly responded to the friendly, middle-class image of Ms Harman (and she pregnant too), while John Spellar's direct South London manners might have dispelled some of the apathy in the housing estates of Peckham. The differences in their policies would, in the end, have had little effect on the result. For, if the research of the pollsters means anything, voters tend to make up their minds on national rather than local perceptions of the Labour Party

It's an idle thought, though, and just *how* idle you can easily judge when I tell you that in Peckham at one Harman press conference, in response to a claim by the SDP that they were making inroads in council estates, the long-suffering Francis Beckett replied thus: 'Well, as Mandy Rice Davis remarked, "they would wouldn't they".' This caused much distress among the political commissars of Peckham CLP, who roundly chastised their press officer for sexism and political unsoundness.

Meanwhile, in Northfield, in the Shenley Junior School on Thursday evening the chairman of the meeting, Cllr Bill Sowton MBE, rose and actually thanked Ann Davis for 'her stirring call to the ladies to play their full part and we really appreciate the part they play'. □

Vincent Hanna is a correspondent with BBC-TV current affairs. He has been following the Peckham and Northfield by-elections for Newsnight.

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the director of *Gregory's Girl* and the producer of *Chariots of Fire*, the latest British filmmakers to win international acclaim, take us through the British film industry on the way to making their new film *A Local Hero*

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STEEL INDUSTRY

Hope fades for steel revival

British steel is peculiarly dependent on the depressed home market. Martin Upham looks at options for survival

LAST WEEK's decision by European Common Market Ministers to restrain their countries' exports to the US may have postponed an international trade war, but it leaves the British steel industry no better off. As a result of the deal the British Steel Corporation will have to halve its sales to the US. Though this will represent less than 3 per cent of the BSC annual production, its domestic market is crumbling so fast that any such loss is extremely serious.

As a result of the erosion, drastic new measures are being put to the government by the BSC. It had been intended that the Corporation would now be moving into periods of profitability with the prospect of achieving surplus over the financial year 1983-4. Instead, there is now no chance of ending losses. The effect on sales of economic recession at home, increased import penetration and sharply increasing protectionism abroad has ruined earlier optimism. On 5 October, two weeks after he had given a private briefing to the press, BSC Chairman Ian MacGregor informed the unions that 'one or two' major plants might have to close depending on the state of the international market. At October's meeting of the International Iron and Steel Institute – the capitalist world association of steel producers – he heard of the gloom with which rival steel giants anticipated the future.

There is some truth in the argument that steel's crisis is international. The US economy now has its worst unemployment since 1940. US companies – used to operating at 80 per cent and more of capacity – are now working at something like half that rate. Output for the first eight months of this year is a stunning 29 million tonnes below that for the equivalent period last year. The Japanese, who in 1980 passed the US to become the world's second largest producers (after the Soviet Union), now expect their 1982 output to be the lowest for a decade. EEC output, governed by a complex system of voluntary and mandatory quotas, is sliding fast in most product sectors. The EEC has estimated that there will be 200m tonnes of steelmaking capacity in the EEC in 1985 – 60m too much. There are few comforting forecasts for any time before the late 1980s.

But international problems should not be allowed to provide an alibi for government. British Steel's predicament is mainly home-grown. Its policy of export restraint in the late Seventies anticipated by some years the current super-protectionism of the United States and has left the UK less dependent on sales abroad than any other major European producer*. For a time MacGregor actually kept up his production by exporting slightly above planned levels. But this option is gradually disappearing as protectionism grows. British Steel – indeed the whole UK steel industry – is being pushed back on to a home market.

BSC's principal problem is the decline in output of domestic manufacturers whose production has slid dramatically since 1975. At that time BSC, leaning on individual industry forecasts, was still planning for a home market of 30 million tonnes of crude steel by 1980. The out-turn was just over half that (admittedly during a strike-hit year). In some cases, the steel-consuming sectors have been hit by falling purchasing power in their home markets; in others, such as cars, the market has been buoyant but met increasingly from abroad. From BSC's point of view, the result has been the same: falling manufacturing output and low levels of activity in construction have led to lost steel output.

Consumption of finished steel, quality average

Sector	1978	1981	% fall
Railways	113,000	64,000	−43
Shipbuilding	114,000	89,000	−22
Construction	542,000	447,000	−18
Elect Engineering	181,000	94,000	−48
Mech Engineering	858,000	543,000	−37
Motor Vehicles	550,000	342,000	−38
Hollow Ware	341,000	213,000	−38
Wire and Wire Manufacts[1]	252,000	375,000	+49
Other	853,000	872,000	+2
Total	3,895,000	3,017,000[2]	−23

1. Reclassification has increased the size of this sector since 1978.
2. Total is average for full year but sectoral figures are the average of three quarters.

British Business

It is often supposed that the bleak picture illustrated by Table 1 is merely the British version of 'declining steel intensity', the falling share of GDP contributed by metal-using manufacturing industry. However, some mature economies offset this problem. Japan, for instance, sustains a high level of steel-based exports and keeps up the level of manufacturing as a proportion of GDP.

A peculiar problem of British Steel is that it was deliberately run as a counter-cyclical influence on the depressed economy. As a result, unlike most other British industries, it now suffers from over and not under-investment. But steel's capital expenditure has been sharply squeezed since Labour's 1978 White Paper, *The Road to Viability*. Its relationship with other industries is now inverted. All BSC expectations have been

Comparative reductions in manpower

	1979 – June 1982 (thous)	1973 – June 1982 (thous)
West Germany	− 23,000	− 47,000
France	− 17,000	− 55,000
Italy	− 6,000	+ 5,000
Belgium	− 6,000	− 29,000
UK	− 50,000	−112,000
Total EEC	−111,000	−240,000

scaled down in anticipation of further manufacturing industry decline. It is inconceivable that it could achieve the high levels of capacity utilisation its large units need to break even, unless there is a major recovery in home demand.

Unlike his predecessor, Sir Charles Villiers, MacGregor has not savaged actual *steelmaking* capacity. Villiers' 1979 plan shut 6.4 million tonnes of manned capability, whereas MacGregor's 1980 plan closed only 0.8 million tonnes. But common to both plans is the removal of large amounts of *rolling* and finishing capacity, and it is this semi-finished or finished steel which the market buys. Under the Tories' Iron and Steel Act (1981) BSC's obligation to provide a full range of steel products to British industry was lifted. This opened the door to privatisation on a wide scale. BSC had already lost its rod capacity before the passage of the Act, by ceding mills and liquid capital to a new firm that also received capital assets from GKN. Similar schemes, under the euphemistic code name of 'phoenix', are under active discussion for engineering steels, bright bars, narrow strip and, it is rumoured, tubes – most of which are used in the car industry. Another scheme for forgings is far advanced, bringing widespread job losses in Scotland and South Yorkshire. Theoretically, BSC could retain 14-15 million tonnes of steelmaking capacity while losing all downstream profitable activities.

And yet, even this prospect of public steelmaking and private rolling has begun to seem ambitious. The first six months of 1982 saw the strongest demand since 1979, offering the prospect of BSC output one million tonnes above 1981 . But with the summer came a severe fall in orders, extensive short-time working and production pauses. It also emerged that imports had grown disproportionately fast in the buoyant conditions of the first half of the year, and did not fall after June. BSC was back where it was in 1979, fighting for a declining share of a declining market, only this time at a much lower level.

CAN ANYTHING be done? There is no prospect of recovery in the domestic markets. Despite the headlines about inflation coming down, the Treasury is revising downwards its growth forecasts. Half of BSC's main export market – the US – has been lost as a result of the EEC deal last week. UK steel exports – which make up 25 per cent of its production – are widely dispersed. But it is hard to see how BSC will be able to find another market for the 200,000 tonnes of steel that will be lost because of American protectionism.

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Some breathing space may be gained by controlling imports into this country. South Africa has not bought any steel from Britain for four years, yet in the first seven months of this year sent 9,000 tonnes to the UK. South Korea sent more than 6,000 tonnes in June compared with little more than 100 tonnes 12 months earlier. Over the same period Eastern European imports grew from less than 2,000 tonnes to more than 31,000. The UK has the power, under Article 19 of GATT, to bring in an emergency block on imports damaging to domestic products; the countries concerned have no room to retaliate in steel (though they might try to block UK imports in other industries). More important, action against 'third countries' will not match the scale of the problem: it can affect one-third of UK imports.

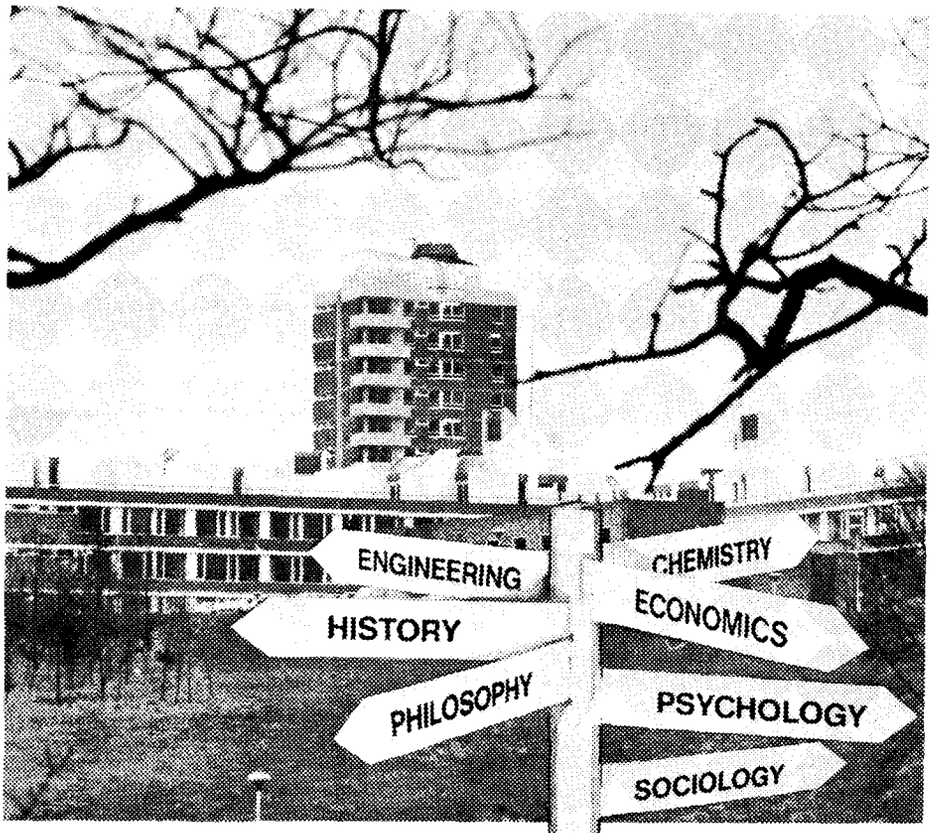
It is the EEC which is responsible for 63 per cent of steel imports into Britain. But action against the massive imbalance of trade in steel products with the EEC is not on the agenda. It would be directly contrary to the government's aggressive free trade stance, which is leading it actually to reduce restrictions, for example of right-hand drive cars made in Europe. A more realistic proposal is for the British government to say that it is time for other European countries, in line with EEC policy, to take their turn in cutting back capacity and manpower. Table 2 shows how the UK has taken the brunt of the manpower cuts. Probably more than any other country, Italy has continued to expand steel production. In 1970 Italy took a 13 per cent share of EEC production. By June 1982, it had reached 20 per cent, producing 24m tonnes, ten million more than the UK.

However, the cutbacks would have to be massive if UK producers are to regain their market share. Weekly imports are 3,100 tonnes above 1970, the last normal year: weekly deliveries are 43,100 tonnes down over the same period. Restoration of the 1979 domestic-foreign balance in the UK market would need a two-thirds cut in EEC imports.

Ian MacGregor's latest threats of major capacity reductions have bound the unions together as never before. The TUC steel committee, which has never called a strike, ran a successful day of action on 22 October, has withdrawn from all discussions which entail redundancies, and taken all worker directors – at national or regional level – off their boards. If the workforce at the threatened Clydebridge works opts for an occupation it will be backed offically. There are strong pressures for declaring that any closure should be met with all-out action. The average age of the workers has fallen, which should mean less willingness to take severance pay, now running at about £9,000 average. MacGregor reports his proposals for action to the Industry Secretary in early November and an announcement will follow. The stage is set for the decisive battle over the future of steel. □

Martin Upham works in the research department of the main steel union, ISTC.

*UK exports to the US peaked at 1,275,300 tonnes in 1971. By 1979 they had fallen to 392,800 tonnes. Exports rose in 1981 but were still less than half the 1971 level.



Are there degrees of latitude?

Quality control is at the centre of a growing controversy in universities and polytechnics. Outside agencies are distrusted as ill-informed or bureaucratic. Internal peer review is regarded as not sufficiently tough and independent. Yet as the battle for resources becomes more intense, quality ranking of departments and institutions will become more urgent.

This week The Times Higher Education Supplement begins a six-part series on academic excellence, what it is and how it can be measured.

Also in this week's issue;

S.P. Rosenbaum on Bloomsbury

José Harris on Attlee

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EDUCATION

Carry on Croxteth

Henry Stewart, a Maths teacher at Croxteth Community School, makes a plea for those who can teach to help this community's fight against cuts

CROXTETH Comprehensive, occupied by parents to prevent closure, has now been open as a community school for a month. Support for the community's legal and material fight to re-open the school has come from local organisations and the labour movement. But the 'intellectuals', those who have academic knowledge and could teach, are, for all their talk of 'grass roots movements', conspicuous by their absence. It's their support we need if the fight to run the school as a school, and as a school that serves the community, is to succeed. So few have shown up to help that, despite the work of the parents and the fund raising of local trade unions, the shortage of teachers may force the school to close.

Two hundred and thirty children come to the school. An Action Committee of parents run it, undertaking all organisational tasks from cleaning and meals to administration. They also help the teachers and some teach subjects themselves, like Games and Motor Mechanics. Otherwise the teaching is done by 25 volunteer teachers, of whom about nine can be there on any one day. A few have decades of teaching experience, some are newly qualified graduates. For the less experienced we hold training workshops and discuss teaching methods openly. All of us decide teaching policy, like discipline and the syllabus, at a weekly meeting. 'It's a complete dream after the rigid administration structures I've worked under', said one teacher.

Croxteth is a council estate of 24,000 people, mainly white and working-class. The estate was built after the war to rehouse people from the dockland slums. Now, 30 years later, it is one of many estates that stand deprived and neglected on the edge of Liverpool. Adult unemployment is near 40 per cent. Of the 16-19 year olds only 78 out of 1,600 have found full-time jobs. The rest are on, or have been on, YOP schemes. On the whole estate there is no cinema, no bank, no post office, no police station, no supermarket and only one community centre. 'Any time there's economies to be made they seem to look at Croxteth and say "we'll take this out",' comments Phil Knibb of the Action Committee. 'We have the highest juvenile crime rate of Western Europe and they withdrew the probation service.'

Standing amidst this desolation was the one asset the council had ever given Croxteth – 'Crocky Comp'. It had relatively impressive resources, including a language lab, video, computer and 32 acres of playing fields. Above all the school was part of the community. 'It was our mainstay', says Eve Loftus, Associate Secretary of the Action Committee. 'The teachers knew all the parents'. Then the council decided to take out the school too.

The children were told to go to Ellergreen, two miles away, with no playing fields and split into two sites by a main road. Even local police supported the parents' campaign to keep Croxteth's school open, fearing that the enforced removal to Ellergreen would send truancy, and therefore crime, rates soaring. As the campaign went on during the summer other people decided the parents were right. 'We won by 31 votes' reads one of the action group's banners referring to the victory in Liverpool City Council when even the Tories, many of whom had visited the school, supported them. Sir Keith Joseph's mind was not moved.

Now the Action Committee is turning to the law, arguing that the closure was unconstitutional. The first the headmaster knew of the decision to close the school was when he read it in the local press. They lost the first round but are appealing. 'The judge effectively told us the council should have consulted us,' says Phil Knibb. But the parents failed to appeal two years ago. 'We're now arguing we couldn't possibly have known then what we know now about procedure. Is there a time limit on justice?'

THREE CHILDREN from Croxteth comprehensive went to university last year. The Action Committee is very proud of them, seeing their achievement as remarkable for an area like Croxteth. But the vision of offering Croxteth's school children a new sort of education is foundering on the shortage of teachers. 'Support from trade unions has been very good and it's getting better', says Phil Knibb, an experienced trade unionist. 'One T&G branch alone donated hundreds of pounds.' With the money, the parents can now provide school meals. But it's the time of teachers they need to provide a good education.

There are no classes now with more than 20 children and in addition to all the basic subjects, options range from Computers and Engineering to Childcare. But anxiety about education has meant that children, especially girls, who hope to pass a number of 'O' levels have tended to go to Ellergreen. 'My mum was worried about my education and wanted me to go to Ellergreen', says Andre Sharp, starting 'O' levels. 'I told her I wouldn't go – that'd be like giving in to the education committee. Now the school's started to get organised some of the kids who went to Ellergreen, they're asking how Croxy's going. You can see they're thinking of coming back.'

Some children do see the school as a 'cushy number', and there is still a ten per cent truancy rate – though this is lower than most schools in the area. There is a demand from a few of the kids to bring back the cane, a clear preference, learned from long habit, of being 'controlled'. The main complaint of the new School Council's chairperson, a remarkably confident first year called Tracy Rendall, is: 'We want more lessons, we're not learning enough now.'

But the enthusiasm and commitment of most of the kids is carrying the experiment through. One experienced Maths teacher says 'one of my groups has more potential than any class I've taught before. Everything in their environment tells them they have no hope and yet they have a real enthusiasm for learning.' This group has voted on its own set of rules and what to do if someone misbehaves or insults another member of the class. A new girls' group has been started and perhaps their strength will be

Derek Massey

Girls leave assembly at Croxteth

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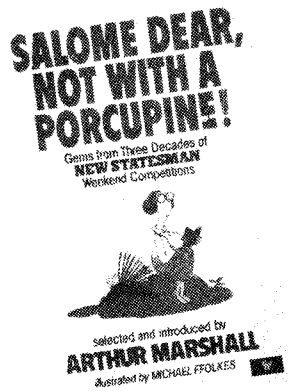
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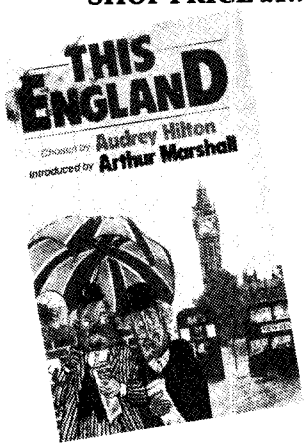

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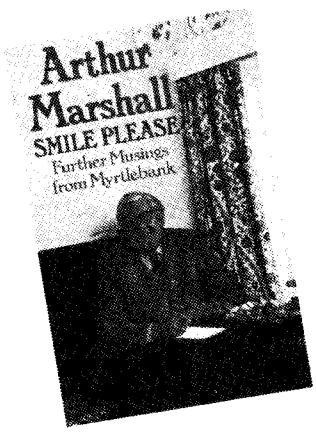

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the best defence against any insults or bullying or loss of faith in education.

The parents are hoping to keep the school going as a good, community school until they can convince the State to accept its responsibilities for Croxteth. None of the arguments put to them for closing the school made much sense. George Smith, the old headmaster, had been told Ellergreen had been preferred because of its sixth form facilities. Then a month ago, the education committee produced a plan for turning Croxteth school into a sixth form college. Now the council has claimed it wants the school for an MSC programme and the occupation is depriving unemployed children of a training. 'They never lose a chance to blame us for something or other. Next they'll be finding some one-legged pensioners we've stopped from doing something', said one parent. In the eyes of the Action Committee, which believes both Ellergreen and Croxteth have a right to their own schools, the choice between the two was not made on educational grounds at all. Croxteth has the largest area of playing fields of any school in Liverpool. Land is profitable. Educating children is not. □

Any qualified teacher or graduate who would like to volunteer one or more day's teaching a week at Croxteth should ring 051 (outside Liverpool) 546 1188.

HEALTH SERVICE

Profits of Scottish ill-health

Rob Edwards reports on an unseemly scramble to build private hospitals in Scotland

THERE ARE GROWING fears that Scotland's strong public health service is being undermined by an unhealthy scramble to build new private hospitals in Edinburgh, Glasgow and possibly elsewhere. This month, for the second time, Scottish Secretary George Younger overturned planning objections by Labour-controlled Glasgow District Council to an £8 million proposal by a group called Glasgow Independent Hospital Ltd to build a 102-bed private hospital in the city.

Since the proposed development was for less than 120 beds, there was no requirement to seek approval from the local health board. Although the battle over the development was formally fought in terms of planning issues such as traffic, the real issue was undoubtedly political. The main financial backing for the project is likely to come from a US-based company, American Medical International, which already runs nine hospitals in England and sees Scotland as a new potential market. Last week, there was anger in the labour movement when it was revealed that a former Labour Lord Provost of Glasgow, Sir William Gray, is to chair the project.

In Edinburgh, the number of proposed private hospitals on the drawing board has come down from three to two. BUPA, Britain's largest health insurance organisation, revealed in March that it was looking for a site for a new £5 million 70-bed hospital in the city. The following month, the construction company Conder Scotland, in association with Seltahart Holdings (which owned six hospitals in England, including three still under construction), announced that it planned a £4 million 60-bed hospital on a site off Corstorphine Road. At the same time a plan for a third £7 million 76-bed hospital at Ravelston Quarry was unveiled by the Hospital Corporation of America UK (HCA).

The promoters all acknowledged that Edinburgh could not sustain demand for three new hospitals. In May, HCA – which claims to be the world's largest hospital management company running over 370 hospitals worldwide – took over Seltahart Holdings and its hospitals for £14 million. Conder Scotland, thus deprived of its business partner, decided to team up with BUPA and the British Linen Bank to push a new £6 million 60-bed development at the Corstorphine Road site.

Last month, the BUPA/Conder proposal was awarded planning permission by Tory-controlled Edinburgh District Council. It was also approved on Tuesday by the Lothian Regional Council, though only after long debate and on the casting vote of the chairman. The final decision lies with George Younger.

The Council's planning sub-committee has recommended rejecting the HCA project as it would intrude on the city's green belt. A group of local doctors and others involved in medicine, calling themselves the Committee to Defend the NHS, have now launched a campaign to try to stop the expansion of private facilities in Edinburgh. They argue that the promoters are greatly over-estimating demand for private care and are taking a political gamble that extra demand will be deliberately manufactured as the public health service is further squeezed.

SINCE THE TORY government's moves to relax controls on full-time NHS consultants doing private work, increasing numbers of them from throughout Scotland have applied to use NHS facilities for private patients. In most areas, the health boards have turned down applications, although some, like Ayrshire and Arran, are known to have accepted.

According to one of Scotland's most pugnacious NHS defenders, the Scottish divisional officer of ASTMS Gordon Craig, there is now growing evidence that a minority of consultants are systematically misusing NHS facilities for their private patients. 'The degree and extent of professional corruption among consultants in Scotland is far greater than I would have expected before we started our campaign against private practice', he said.

He quotes a case where a Glasgow consultant was pretending that a patient actually in a private clinic was in a NHS hospital in order to get laboratory work done free. In another case, patients in a hospital in Ayrshire complained that they had been made to pay for their babies to be delivered, a matter which was investigated by the police. The Crown Office has said that it is taking no action on the case, giving no reason for its decision. The Crown Office is also currently considering the case of an Edinburgh consultant who is alleged to have used NHS premises and equipment for tests on private patients resident in America.

An investigation by Forth Valley Health Board was reported in June to have found five unnamed consultants guilty of carrying out unauthorised private work over the last two years, charging fees said to amount to a total of around £1,500. A spokesman for the Board said that the consultants involved had not intentionally broken the rules, but there had been 'a muddle and a misunderstanding' due to 'insufficiently explicit' guidance. Last year, Mr Alex Spence, an orthopaedic consultant from Aberdour, was reprimanded by Fife Health Board for allowing a private patient to jump the queue for beds at the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy.

In the midst of a fierce controversy earlier this year the Greater Glasgow Health Board refused to authorise any NHS premises for private use. ASTMS has recently received evidence that a consultant cardiologist at the city's Western Infirmary, Dr J. A. Kennedy, has been sending his private paying patients to the hospital's Exercise Testing Unit for free tests. Dr Kennedy has told the *New Statesman* that this had happened previously, but that it was not happening any more. □

THIS ENGLAND

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□ A bridegroom left his own wedding reception to burgle the home of a guest, Birkenhead Crown Court was told yesterday. Mr W. Smith, prosecuting, said the best man was told about it and went along and burgled the same home. A third man who was a guest at the reception drove the car to carry away the stolen property. – *Guardian* (D. Herman)

□ The Jockey Club have launched an appeal for money and materials to provide two days' racing in the Falkland Islands at the end of February. – *Sporting Life* (Fred Riley)

□ He encountered no opposition except from the present Lady Spencer, stepmother of the Princess of Wales. She wrote to Sykes saying that she would hope he would not dig up the story of a Lord Robert Spencer (who died in 1688 at 22, a famous brawler and drinker) and thus damage the reputation of a distinguished family in an age when the ideals of society were already 'drifting towards Marxism'. – *Observer* (G. Moor)

□ Traffic wardens on duty at one of Oxford's worst traffic bottle necks have been accused of acting with 'Edwardian courtesy' and not issuing enough parking tickets. – *Oxford Times* (Rebecca Hall)

□ A vegetarian who stole a packet of pork chops told the court: 'I seem to do stupid things.' – *Edinburgh Evening News* (Mary M. Simpson)

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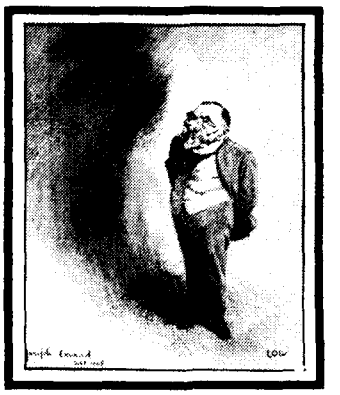

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DIARY

Christopher Price

To Belfast, where the Education Select Committee is taking evidence on the polytechnic-university merger in the wake of the elections. Among the souvenirs I aim to come home with is a plastic bullet – or 'baton round', as it is euphemistically described by the army. It is better described in an excellent pamphlet by Lord Gifford (*Death on the Streets of Derry*, NCCL, 75p). It is very like a baton for a relay race, a great, chunky lump of plastic, 3¼ by 1½ inches, fired at up to 170 miles per hour – over twice the speed of Ray Lindwall. Since April last year, these missiles have killed eight people, including three children, and no soldier has been prosecuted. Though nearly 30,000 were fired around the province last year, they are hard to come by, as they are the first ecological military missile since the arrow – designed to be scooped up after each battle and re-used. If I thought they'd save a single IRA victim, I'd tolerate them; but they poison the whole communal atmosphere, as well as killing people. In spite of a plea by Don Concannon, the Labour Party Conference rejected them last month; I hope the European Court of Human Rights will pronounce against them also, before long.

○

South from Belfast to Armagh to talk to youngsters at the technical college, one of whose school friends had had his father gunned to death in broad daylight. Then west to Derry through beautiful countryside with only the barbed wire round the police station as a reminder of the death in the atmosphere. In Derry a group of worthy citizens come to plead for a university or polytechnic there; what the city most needs is employment; but an educational bridge across the Foyle might do something to unite it.

○

Back at Westminster, there's an unaccountable lull at the moment in the War of Jenkins' Bottom, with the Social Democrats lurking in the undergrowth somewhere, unwilling to come out and pray. I have a feeling they will regain their Christian convictions for the televised State Opening next week, when they can all get dressed up and look suitably pompous, wandering through the Lords to hear the Queen. I am firmly in favour of restricting television in the Commons to such empty, ceremonial occasions – though I would allow the cameras in to televise select committees. Last July, my colleague Martin Flannery would have got himself a sure spot on the 9 o'clock news, when he brought into the Committee a plastic bag containing a meagre Lincolnshire school dinner, to wave in the face of Dr Boyson. I suppose that's what the authorities are terrified of. It is already a terrible crime to bring a 'thing' into the Chamber. I often muse about concealing a plastic bullet on my person to unleash at the Tory ministers from my strategic seat below the gangway, just to let them know how it feels; but then I conclude that it's best to leave the reputation for Parliamentary hooliganism firmly with Michael Heseltine and his mace-twirling episode in 1976 – for which Mrs Thatcher demoted him from Industry to Environment, where he has languished ever since.

○

As another year's legislation is finally tied up this week, it is surprising to find how few genuine, professional legislators there are in Parliament. Leo Abse is Labour's No. 1 expert. He's wangled through a Bill this session to give battered women who retaliate to the point of killing their menfolk some right to inherit the marital home. A common legislative ruse is to tack a clause on to the tail end of a Bill in its final stages. This is how Lord Wigoder abolished 'dock statements' last week; along with a number of colleagues, I tried the same tactic to change the law on inquests, and would have succeeded, but for Lord Hailsham's obstinacy. After the chaos of the New Cross Fire inquest last year, we wanted a judge to take over from a coroner at inquests, whenever it seemed sensible. The Home Office was sympathetic to the change – but Lord Hailsham did not want his judges in the firing line, so the payroll vote trooped in to reject the idea.

ROGER WODDIS

Parsons' nose

Mrs Thatcher has appointed Sir Anthony Parsons, former British Ambassador to the United Nations, as her adviser on foreign affairs.

The word went out from Number Ten,
  Where sits our nice-as-ice employer,
The country's prime comedienne:
'A stooge is needed, gentlemen,
  To feed my paranoia.'

And that is how I joined the swim,
  As faithful aider and abettor,
To keep an eye on Francis Pym
And hold a brolly over him,
  Before he gets much wetter.

My role is really ministerial,
  Like Kissinger's in Nixon's day,
And when I hear the Call Imperial
For satisfying breakfast cereal,
  I'll be her special 'K'.

The Foreign Office has its foes,
  And I would rather die than hurt it,
But when my Lady's bugle blows,
I'll lay my finger to my nose
  And loyally insert it.

○

The bitterness over the 'open verdict' on the New Cross deaths still rankles in Lewisham among the black community, who see a white legal Establishment as cold and unsympathetic in refusing a second inquest. But in the debate last week, the Home Office told them not to worry. The Lord Chancellor had just appointed Britain's first Sikh judge; it is just unfortunate that this brave, token gesture has already been blunted this year by three, rather more senior, white Appeal Court judges, deciding that Sikhs are not entitled to protection from racial discrimination.

○

The job of reading out all this specious nonsense about Sikh judges was given to Patrick Mayhew, Whitelaw's No. 2. He's an immensely tall, urbane lawyer, whose first job was at the Department of Employment, as Thatcher's spy on Prior; somehow, in spite of arguing quite nastily at times with 'Mother' – as they all increasingly call her – he was promoted to the Home Office and replaced by a less intelligent and argumentative spy. He has achieved the enviable reputation for being ultra wet and dry simultaneously, and every time poor Willie waffles his way into trouble, one can see the more intelligent Conservatives praying for Patrick to take over the job. I suspect he will one day.

○

I seem to have irritated my front bench defence colleagues by implying, they feel, that they've not been promoting Labour's non-nuclear defence policies. If so, I did them an injustice (Diary, 15 October). I've been re-reading all their speeches and can report that all of them – John Silkin, Kevin McNamara and Dr Oonagh McDonald – have been expounding party policy with comprehensive eloquence in ill-attended debate after ill-attended debate. But the problem remains – how to put the policy over to a nation which sees the Prime Minister as victor in a non-nuclear war; though the Franks enquiry will soon partially straighten the record, this perception remains our Achilles heel.

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China turns back to USSR

Dev Murarka explores the tentative and byzantine negotiations to heal the Sino-Soviet split

Moscow

AUGUST 1982 was the turning point in Sino-Soviet relations. It is necessary to understand this in order to comprehend the possible outcomes of the current negotiations, inaugurated by Mr Leonid Ilychev. The Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister arrived in Beijing on 4 October.

When Mr Brezhnev made his call for improvement in relations with China from Asian soil in Tashkent on 24 March, he was not ringing a bell in an empty sky. The groundwork for his speech had been laid by a series of semi-official but intensive visits between the two countries.

Four Soviet visits to China were crucial, though in different ways. Two Soviet sinologists, Mr Boris Riftin and Mr Alexander Grigoriev went there in the autumn and winter of 1981, creating a helpful psychological climate. More substantive political explorations were done by academician Sergei Tikhvinsky and Professor Mikhail Kapitsa, both senior officials in the Soviet Foreign Ministry and leading China experts. They were in Beijing in early 1982, but their visit took place only after a secret weekend meeting between Soviet Foreign Ministry and Chinese Embassy officials in the rest resort of Zavidova in early December 1981. The most notable Chinese visit to the Soviet Union was by several top-ranking economists from February till May.

After these explorations the ground was considered ripe for a fresh approach to China, because there were other encouraging indications from Beijing. So Brezhnev spoke up. But while the Chinese gave a guarded welcome to the Brezhnev proposal, they clearly showed that at that stage they were not prepared to commit themselves. For them the most important factor in the situation was the pending 12th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. As relations with the Soviet Union have always been a contentious internal issue among the Chinese leaders, they had to settle their foreign policy approach before the Congress.

At stake was Deng Xiaoping's credibility since he had risked so much on his connection with Washington. But in the summer of 1982, Washington was mercilessly exposing the weakness of Deng's strategy by brushing aside not just China's theoretical claims to Taiwan, but also the Chinese pretensions about influencing relations between the United States and Taiwan.

In the event, the Americans gave Deng no real help. The joint Sino-American communiqué issued on 17 August on American arms supplies to Taiwan, while reaffirming that the island was part of China, failed to provide any undertaking by Washington to end such supplies in the foreseeable future. It was a resounding political defeat for Deng, and he knew it.

Indeed, Deng had prepared for this eventuality carefully. On 8 August, while the negotiations with the Americans on the Taiwan issue were in their final stages, Mr Yu Hungliang, head of the Soviet and East European Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, arrived in Moscow. He came ostensibly as an inspector of Chinese embassies in Eastern Europe. In Moscow, however, he had meetings with Professor Kapitsa, head of the First Far East Department in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, and Mr Ilyichev. On the morning of 12 August, he left for Warsaw and returned to Moscow on the evening of 14 August. He stayed on in Moscow till 18 August.

THE DATES of Mr Yu's Moscow visit are crucial. For the Sino-American communiqué was published on 17 August. The Warsaw trip may partly have been to keep up the fiction that Yu was on an inspection tour, or he may have wanted access to more secure communications. (Warsaw was, incidentally, the main venue for secret Chinese-American contacts during the 1950s and 1960s.) But by the time Yu left for Warsaw, Soviet irritation at his foot-dragging tactics was considerable. It was vented on the evening of 11 August, the day before Yu's departure for Warsaw. A communiqué issued after a meeting between Mr Brezhnev and Mr Erich Honecker, the East German leader, complained that China shows no signs of being interested in normalising its relations with the socialist countries. The USSR and GDR draw the appropriate conclusions from this.

When Mr Yu returned to Moscow, the Chinese knew the worst about the American position on Taiwan and negotiations with the Russians moved rapidly to a conclusion, amid vapours of mutual goodwill. This was reflected in the change of tone in a communiqué issued on 20 August after Mr Brezhnev met Mr Yamgin Tsedenbal, leader of the Mongolian Peoples Republic. This simply stated that 'the MPR is in complete agreement with the positions on China set out by L. I. Brezhnev in his well-known speech in Tashkent'.

On that same morning, 20 August, two days after the departure of Mr Yu, the Soviet Foreign Ministry presented an *aide-memoire* to the Chinese Embassy, embodying the conclusions of the talks with Yu. An indirect reply came on 21 August, when the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr Huang Hua, declared in Beijing that China would not play the 'American card' against Moscow or the 'Soviet card' against Washington. That evening and the next day Soviet media gave this prominent publicity. The official Chinese memorandum came on 31 August, inviting a Soviet representative to Beijing for talks.

Moscow, however, still needed time to assess Chinese intentions and to see how Deng and his supporters emerged from the Congress. There was no certainty that this was not just a Chinese diversionary tactic to strengthen their hand with the Americans and to keep control over the Congress.

In the event the Congress showed no anti-Russian tendencies. Even more persuasive evidence came from information about secret meetings addressed by Chinese leaders in Beijing after the Congress, in which it was made clear that China was going to adopt a more questioning attitude towards its relations with America and would make a genuine effort to improve its ties with the Soviet Union – above all its economic ties.

To signal Moscow's positive assessment of developments, Mr Brezhnev delivered his second major speech on Sino-Soviet relations in six months, this time in Baku on 26 September. The Baku speech was aimed in part at those in the Soviet Union, who had been made uneasy by his first Tashkent speech. For, just as policy towards the So-

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viet Union is an internal political factor in Beijing, so is the China question within the Soviet political hierarchy. Many had strong reservations about the terms on which the rapprochement is being sought, above all the unqualified endorsement of China as a 'Socialist country' contained in the Tashkent speech. Brezhnev was tactfully silent about this in Baku.

FOR THE MOMENT, though, such delicate problems are not being allowed to come in the way of negotiations. There are strong imperatives on both sides, aside from their triangular relationship with America, pushing the two countries towards normalising relations. The process will not be easy and it is already evident that the Chinese intend to move at a slower pace than the Russians would like. For instance, from the outset the Chinese appear to have taken up the issue of Kampuchea and Soviet support for Vietnam as a major issue rather than the question of Soviet troop withdrawals from the Chinese borders. For, while bilateral issues are easier to resolve (particularly troop withdrawals which only need an administrative order) multilateral issues are more complex and take time. But it is also easy to accept face-saving compromises on multilateral issues. Moscow, however, is not taking any risks which might give the Chinese a fresh excuse to suspend negotiations.

It might appear on the surface that Moscow has made most of the running so far. Certainly, the Russians have been anxious to negotiate. But the early concessions have really come from the Chinese side. The Chinese had to send Yu to Moscow on the eve of the congress and in the midst of critical negotiations with the United States. The Chinese had given the impression that they would not negotiate unless some preconditions were met. As the Sino-Soviet negotiations reopen, however, Russian troops are still in their place on borders and in Mongolia, they are still in Afghanistan and Soviet support for the Vietnamese in Kampuchea continues. The fact is that Sino-Soviet relations are emerging from the gothic horrors of a distended Maoism and the great proletarian cultural revolution and entering a byzantine phase of negotiations and political manoeuvres. The dynamic for this is provided not only by a disintegrating Maoism but by the common Sino-Soviet discovery over the last decade that their American connection was unreliable as well as unprofitable. □

DRUG TRAFFIC: 1

Dependence on coke

Peasants grow it, mafias control it, the US outlaws it, US youth consume it. Tony Jenkins reports

LAST WEEK'S ARREST in California of Mr John De Lorean on drug trafficking charges has drawn attention once again to the role of marijuana and cocaine in the West, particularly in the United States. Liberal opinion tends to regard one as a harmless recreational drug and the other as a symbol of radical chic. Almost no attention, though, is ever paid to the much more serious effect of the trade in the countries of the Third World, where the drugs originate.

Romano Cagnoni

A member of the Colombian mafia guards the marijuana.

Colombia is the world's largest exporter of cocaine. The drugs industry there is destroying the rest of the Colombian economy and contributing directly to a rapid continuing erosion of civil rights.

The industry would in practice hardly exist without the demand from the United States. The irony, however, is that the US simultaneously insists that the trade should be illegal. Since Colombia is dependent on the US politically and for its massive foreign loans, it has no choice but to comply.

Colombia's domestic cocaine demand is small. Only about 3 per cent of the marijuana crop is retained for sale internally. For thousands of years, Colombian Indians have chewed the coca leaf from which cocaine is refined. This is not the escapism of cocaine-sniffing sons and daughters of America's middle-class. The Indians frown on intemperate use of the drug. To them it has magical and ceremonial value. The effects of chewing also combat cold, hunger and fatigue in an otherwise inhospitable climate.

At first sight, export sales of the drugs ought to be beneficial to Colombia. Certainly drug money has turned some long-forgotten provincial backwaters into consumer boom-towns. For peasant cultivators, the crops yield at least twice the income of more traditional subsistence crops, despite the fact that they receive a mere 1 per cent of the eventual street value of the drugs. But the real damage being done is illustrated by the following statistics.

Forty-five million regular or occasional smokers in the United States spend $10bn a year on marijuana, and the even more profitable cocaine market is rapidly expanding. Last year the US ambassador to Bogota, Diego Asencio, estimated Colombia's cocaine exports at $3bn a year. Colombia's National Association of Financial Institutions (ANIF), which is calling for cultivation and export of marijuana to be legalised, estimates that illegal foreign sales of the drug raise the equivalent of 40 per cent of Colombia's entire legal exports.

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In the mid-1970s, the most immediate effect of this income was to boost domestic inflation in Colombia. The rightist government responded with tough monetarist economic policies which restricted credit; slashed desperately needed spending on projects to provide drinking water and sanitation; and decimated education and welfare.

In this situation, only a tiny minority of Colombians have profited from the drugs business. ANIF estimates that just 7,000 Colombian middlemen take 93 per cent of the export value of marijuana. This gives the self-styled drug mafias tremendous financial power. Any economic strategy which ignores this power is doomed, as the failure of the monetarist government's attempt to squeeze credit has proved. Credit-starved businessmen have simply turned to the drug mafias to finance their activities. But the traffickers, though happy to have a means of laundering their earnings, have charged high interest rates for the loans; up to 5 per cent per month. These interest charges are passed to the consumer as higher prices.

The hike given to inflation and interest rates by drug money has forced devaluations of the peso in a vain attempt to keep other exporting industries competitive. Drug money has swelled imports of manufactured goods, depressing domestic industries. These have also been undermined by a smuggling boom, catering for expensive mafia tastes. The traffickers' need to dispose of their illicit cash has led to the speculative stockpiling of food and consumer goods, creating shortages and pushing up prices.

ANIF has detected other damaging effects of the drug money washing through the economy. Drug millionaires have been buying up land and businesses to legitimise their clandestine fortunes and to achieve social acceptability. Land prices are now spiralling as a result and small and medium-sized companies, are being swallowed up by growing monopoly concerns, which use their market position to push up prices faster. Mafia spending on luxury homes has also had the effect of pushing up housing costs for the relatively poor Colombian middle and professional classes.

Financiers find the easy profits in the illegal credit market more attractive than risking capital in industrial investments. The president of the National Industrialists' Association of Colombia has said: 'Investing in legal, productive activities is bad business'.

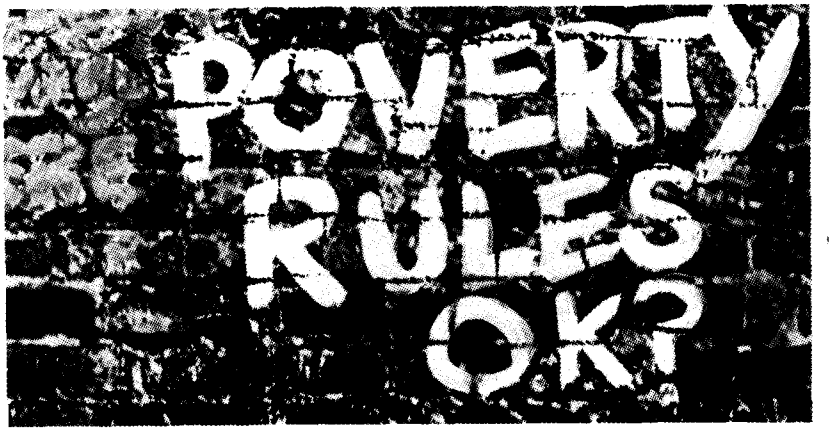
Meanwhile, in the countryside, food crops are being uprooted to make way for drug cultivation, further inflating food prices. Peasants are being forced off their lands by big landowners moving into marijuana production, for marijuana is not a labour intensive crop. The largest legal export – coffee – employs two million people. But marijuana, which earns almost the same revenue, supports just 40,000 peasant families. The dispossessed join the landless peasants streaming into unemployment in the big cities.

At the same time, because the crop is officially illegal, those who remain in the marijuana fields suffer from spraying with Paraquat and defoliants, funded by US anti-drugs agencies trying to stamp out the industry. No-one yet knows the long-term effect of this on the rural population, its water supplies and nearby food crops, let alone the side-effects on the drug users.

The police have also been officially sanctioned to use brutal methods to disrupt marijuana harvesting. The peasants' response has been to arm themselves, or to turn to the mafias for protection, giving them a yet more complete stranglehold on the industry.

Other factors have helped to strengthen the mafias. Colombian government anti-narcotics agencies have been rocked by scandals. One was even found to be operating as a cocaine trafficking network itself in 1974. In practice, the security forces have allowed the mafias to control the trade, taking their cut via middlemen. Since late 1978, when thousands of troops occupied the Guajira region with such brutality that eventually they were withdrawn, no serious or systematic attempt has been made by the security forces to stop cultivation. Occasionally, a raid is announced to placate public opinion and the White House. But this usually only means that another small cultivator has been cut out, or that a mafia has not paid its dues.

But it provided the generals with an excuse to demand more military expenditure and major changes in legislation. Many claim that this has effected a gradual, blood-



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less coup d'etat in Colombia. The country's claim to be a democracy was always shaky, but ex-President Lleras Restrepo believes that Colombia became a true military state.

In 1978 a State of Siege was declared, though now temporarily suspended. It codified a series of decrees which gave the army exceptional powers to combat drug traffickers and the country's growing left-wing guerrilla movement. These powers have mainly been used to kill trade unionists, peasant leaders and political opponents. In return for pay-offs, the army has also helped landowners seize peasant lands. This process has been the subject of two recent Amnesty International reports.

CORRUPTION is not a new phenomenon in Colombia; bribery has always been part of the way of life. But the huge sums now involved are unprecedented. ANIF has calculated that over $100 million changed hands in marijuana-linked bribes in one year alone. This corruption has seriously undermined confidence in state institutions; generals, judges, regional governors and diplomats have all had to be dismissed in drug-linked scandals. Drug smugglers caught red-handed are unaccountably cleared in the courts. President Carter's former drug adviser, Dr Peter Bourne, even implicated ex-President Turbay in drug trafficking. As the army assumes ever more executive power and mafia influence grows, public cynicism is shown in poor turnouts at the elections. Only 13 per cent of the Bogota electorate bothered to vote in the 1980 regional elections.

The old ruling class claims to be horrified by the activities of the new breed of drug-funded businessmen. They say the philosophy of the quick buck is undermining the old moral order. But while they turn the mafiosos away from their clubs, they welcome them into their banks. The establishment is in fact closely allied with the mafias. Traditional landowners are now engaged in trafficking and major firms have grown with drug money. The mafias are as keen as the establishment to maintain the existing social and political order.

In the face of these developments, the four main guerrilla groups operating in Colombia have inevitably gained new members and new sympathy. They have until recently been engaged in almost daily activity and have attacked the presidential palace twice this year. The mafias have responded by creating their own death squad, Death to Kidnappers. Despite its name, it has concentrated its activity on trade unionists and popular leaders. Even this year's Nobel Prize winning novelist, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, has had to flee the country.

Colombia's new President, Belisario Betancourt, has inherited a Colombia slipping inexorably towards a repeat of the civil war which killed 300,000 in the 1950s. The drugs industry has brought that prospect much closer. It was the realisation of this threat that led Betancourt to an unprecedented series of meetings with guerrilla leaders and to propose an amnesty. Like most cash crops drugs have become a commodity, grown to satisfy demand in the industrialised nations of the North. These tensions are compounded by the North's insistence that Colombia continue to outlaw the crops. Legalisation alone would not solve Colombia's economic problems, nor provide the basis for a more equitable society. But it would remove some of the most evil repercussions of the trade. □

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DRUG TRADE: 2

Drug giants sell on

Products banned in Bangladesh are to be re-exported reports

Amrit Wilson

ON 6 OCTOBER eight major drug companies whose products were banned as harmful or unnecessary under Bangladesh's new Drug Ordinance (*NS* 9 July) wrung a major concession from the government – they were granted export licences for the medical preparations which were due for destruction in Bangladesh on 12 September. These preparations may now well end up in other Third World countries.

The Drug Ordinance, announced in June following the recommendations of an Expert Committee, had banned several categories of drugs, for example liquid formulations of antibiotics unsuitable for children (like ICI's Imperacin Syrup); combinations of antibiotics, of analgesics or of vitamins; and all cough mixtures, throat lozenges and gripe waters 'because they are of little therapeutic value and amount to a great wastage of our meagre resources'. In addition the Ordinance put an end to Third Party Licensing, under which multinational drug companies with no factories in Bangladesh marketed products manufactured in Bangladeshi factories under their brand name.

The drug companies responded by rallying their supporters. British, US and Dutch diplomats visited government officials and ministers to urge reconsideration. In August, while the World Health Organisation's local representative refused to 'applaud or condemn' the new policy, the drug companies themselves placed advertisements in the major dailies denouncing it as an international plot engineered by Oxfam, War on Want and Gonoshasthya Pharmaceuticals (a Bangladeshi firm which had received some funding from the charities). The Ordinance was, the companies claimed, a Christian plot against the Muslims.

In the face of these pressures the Bangladesh government has acceded to a number of specific demands – the granting of the export licences for harmful drugs is the latest. Now, although the main principles of the drugs policy remain intact, there is a danger that special cases are being created which will re-open the door for categories of drugs which are now banned.

Pfizer, for example, has successfully cleared the drug Heptuna Plus. This is a mixture of iron, folic acid and multi-vitamins. As such it had failed the criteria of acceptability laid down by the Expert Committee. However, following the insistence of certain gynaecologists – among them Professor Feroza Begum, a director of Pfizer – that the drug is necessary treatment for anaemic mothers, the ban on Heptuna Plus has been lifted. Meanwhile, other drug companies are claiming to be short of just one ingredient for some preparation which they must import in order to be able to use up stocks of the other ingredients. So far the government has held out against this.

Concessions made to the drug companies include allowing third party licences to run their terms (though they will not be renewable); and extending the time limit on certain preparations from nine months to 18 months to use up stocks. In addition, drugs categorised as harmful are now awaiting shipment from Bangladesh. According to Andy Chetley of War on Want who has just returned from Dacca:

> There is nothing to stop these drugs being exported to other develping countries. ICI's tetracycline syrup might go back to England for re-export under a new label to Saudi Arabia; BPI (May and Baker) may send their drugs back to West Germany to be re-routed to West Africa; and Organon's Orabolin drops could reach Saudi Arabia and Africa via Europe.

However Jeff Holman of ICI's pharmaceutical department said: 'The drugs are not being sent back here. Where they'll go from Bangladesh is a commercial and legal question.'

Will Bangladesh's drug policy survive? Members of the Expert Committee, like Professor Nurul Islam, are optimistic. International support (from health workers and non-government organisations) has been of crucial importance, they say. The drug companies now have a new factor to contend with: 'When people are given prescriptions they are asking the doctors if any of the drugs are banned . . . the policy has changed the prescribing habits of doctors.' □

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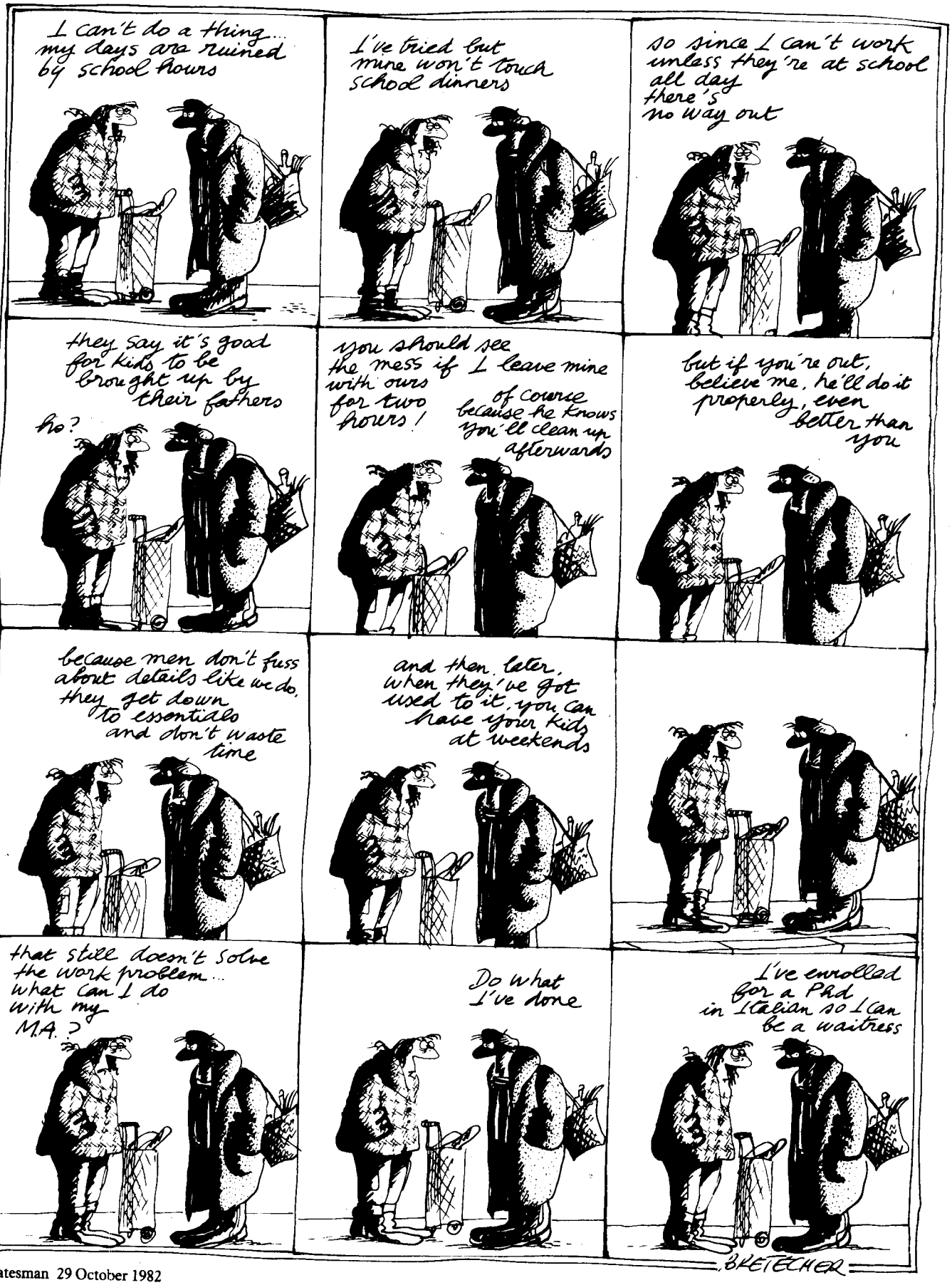
BRETECHER

THE WINDS OF CHANGE


I can't do a thing... my days are ruined by school hours
I've tried but mine won't touch school dinners
so since I can't work unless they're at school all day there's no way out
they say it's good for kids to be brought up by their fathers
ho?
you should see the mess if I leave mine with ours for two hours!
of course because he knows you'll clean up afterwards
but if you're out, believe me, he'll do it properly, even better than you
because men don't fuss about details like we do, they get down to essentials and don't waste time
and then later, when they've got used to it, you can have your kids at weekends
that still doesn't solve the work problem... what can I do with my M.A.?
Do what I've done
I've enrolled for a PhD in Italian so I can be a waitress
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

An open letter

Dr Swee Chai Ang, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Gazza Hospital, Sabra-Chatila Camp, West Beirut, Lebanon

My name is Dr Swee Chai Ang (Mrs Khoo). I am a woman Orthopaedic Surgeon, a member of the British Medical Association, and a member of the Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of London, and permanently residing in Great Britain. I left London on 15 August 1982, in response to a Beirut appeal for an Orthopaedic Surgeon.

I am writing to you from West Beirut, from Gazza Hospital, the hospital for Sabra-Chatila camp. I am one of the members of the Foreign Medical Team which worked right through the massacre of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian people in the camps which took place between 15-18 September 1982. I treated some of the victims, witnessed the shelling and bulldozing of Palestinians and Lebanese people.

Those who have died have already died, and none of us can bring them back to life again. I am now appealing to you on behalf of those who have survived the massacre – mostly women and young children. Most of their homes have been bombed, shelled, bulldozed and looted. There is no electricity for them, and a scarcity of safe water supply. Yet thousands have returned to live in these heaps of rubble because they otherwise will have nowhere else to go to.

The Lebanese winter is coming, and thousands will have no roofs over their heads.

Then there is the problem of livelihood. With most of the male population aged between 15 to 60 years old either shot, arrested or asked to leave, the breadwinners for many families are gone.

I have seen many women from these camps soliciting in the streets to get some income to feed their little children. This, in the local culture, is the worst form of humiliation for these women – especially when their husbands' bodies are still rotting in the rubble.

While peace returns to Beirut, nightclubs, cinemas, brothels and entertainment parks re-open. High finance and banking return. Yet 250,000 people are living in utter misery and insecurity. They have no rights, no work permits and live in ruin and rubble. Then the ruins and rubble are officially declared illegal and many are asked to quit their partially destroyed homes at short notice – not knowing where to go from here.

As one who originates from the Third World, I have seen much poverty and suffering. But this is the worst I have ever come across so far. They need every help and support you can give. Many of them are emotionally prepared to starve or die of cold, but they have asked me to beg you to recognise them as human beings – like yourselves – and they wish to be accorded a human status.

If you have any room in your hearts for these people, please help them.

Women for peace

Gloria Frankel, President, British Section, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, London WC1

Our attention has been called to Peter Pringle's article (*NS* 15 October) on the American government's attempts to discredit the peace movement, including our United States Section. This is to report that the American government is not alone in this. An American woman wearing a WILPF badge was stopped recently by an immigration official at Heathrow and questioned extensively on the organisations she belonged to and her reasons for visiting the UK.

While the two founders of the WILPF were Americans, British women were active in it from the start of the organisation in 1915 and the British Section is the oldest women's peace group in the UK. We are proud to be part of a world-wide organisation seeking disarmament and the reduction of international tensions.

Social Democrats and Liberals

Tony Greaves, Organising Secretary, Association of Liberal Councillors, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks.

Peter Kellner (*NS* 15 October) mixes up social democracy with the members of the SDP. Some of the latter are clearly Social Democrats: some are clearly not and some should clearly be in the Liberal Party. If the principled case for the SDP and Liberals remaining as distinct parties has not been convincingly made by Social Democrats, as Peter suggests, the same is not true on the Liberal side. The case made by, for example, Michael Meadowcroft, for the historical and philosophical difference and distinction between Liberalism and Social Democracy (and Socialism and Toryism) is clear, coherent and in my view unanswerable.

It's too easy just to pick on single issues to illustrate differences (Peter chooses nuclear power and weaponry, and local police accountability). In fact these illustrate much deeper and wider distinctions: that Liberals have both a much 'greener' view than the SDP, and a strong anti-militarist tradition: and that Liberals have a much stronger commitment to localist solutions as well as to civil liberties. Many other single issues could be brought out to illustrate similar quite basic differences of approach.

We've already seen some of the social democrats on the right of the Liberal Party move over to the SDP. I've no doubt we would welcome many Social Democrats (i.e. SDP members) in our ranks, as they realise they are really Liberals lost in the wrong party (and there are also many liberals who misguidedly think they are socialists!). But the philosophical differences and justifications for the two parties existing will remain, and as long as the SDP remains in existence they will remain so and the two parties will retain separate identities.

The matter with Britain

Bernard Crick, Birkbeck College, London WC1

I am sorry to have misquoted Sam Beer. He, indeed, said that 'the blazing integrity of Shirley Williams might prove to be charismatic', not 'pleasing integrity' as I had it. But it is misinterpretation plainly that worries him more, for he says in his letter (*NS* 22 October): 'Moreover, my usage is soundly Weberian. Surely integrity can be heroic.' Thus he replies to my mocking him for misusing Weber's concept of charismatic authority to praise a person and to puff the Social Democratic bubble.

Weber defined charisma as when a person is 'set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary . . .' Does he really wish to embarrass poor Shirley so, to claim that she is our English Maid of Orleans? He is just using the word in a debased, rhetorical, journalistic way.

'Charisma' means much more than 'heroic' integrity. And, while we are on the subject, he should see that not all of us agree that it is heroic to have run from a fight. Roy Jenkins belongs where he now is. Shirley's case, a scholarly observer should see, was very problematic, a genuine dilemma. But Beer has simply thrown his hat in the ring for the British Social Democrats, casting his old dispassion to the winds.

Lunching out

Nicholas A. H. Stacey, Reform Club, London SW1

I, too, attended the 'grand luncheon' sneeringly and patronisingly mentioned (*New Statesman*, 15 October) by your diarist, Price. The occasion was to honour an American Grand Old Man who gave his name to a US-UK educational exchange programme, benefiting thousands of young Brits since 1949 by widening their horizons.

Apart from denigrating this exceptionally useful educational programme, and hence its founder who was present – a sad lapse in the comedy of manners but in keeping with the new spirit of brutalism – why does Price bother to find himself increasingly at such grand luncheons at all, especially when in conflict with its raison d'etre? I am sure not because he enjoys the perks of hospitality to MPs; so it would be rivetting to learn why.

A lot of it about

William Boyd, Oxford

Sandra Hewett (letters 22 October) takes me to task for not addressing the 'burning question' of why Spike Milligan in particular – and comedy shows in general – keep showing cleavages, 'enormous bared tits' etc. under the impression that they're going to raise a laugh. I agree with her: it's not only sad, it's also not in the slightest bit funny.

But if, instead of castigating me, she took the trouble to flick through her back issues of the *NS* she would discover that on at least two occasions (*NS* 19 February, 26 March) I have aired exactly those reservations she demands of me.

Christmas greetings

Abdul Minty, Honorary Secretary, Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1

1982 will be the 20th Christmas that Nelson Mandela will have spent separated from his family because of his continuing incarceration in the dungeons of apartheid. The trials and tribulations of the Mandela family are not unique. There will be hundreds of families of Namibian and South African political prisoners who will miss their mothers or fathers, their daughters or sons this year.

May I therefore take this opportunity to invite your readers to send Christmas and New Year greeting to the banned and banished, and to the families of political prisoners and those who have been executed or murdered in detention in South Africa and Namibia.

For the hundreds of victims of apartheid laws such greetings are both welcomed and appreciated. Please write to us for a list of names and addresses enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

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James Bentley

God, books and mammon

The Frankfurt Book Fair, 1982

'I'VE GOT some good news for you,' said one of my publishers at the Frankfurt Book Fair recently. 'You're no longer banned in South Africa.' I hadn't realised that I ever *was* banned there; but still, it did seem like good news. The following day the same publisher said, 'I've more good news: I think a German publisher has taken an option on your book.'

The Frankfurt Book Fair is about the second piece of good news rather than the first. Frankfurt is essentially about making money from books. In so far as not being banned in South Africa means more sales, that too is cause for joy. At Frankfurt, for five-and-a-half days every year, publishers, literary agents, book-packagers and a few (very few) authors trudge round each other's stands to bargain, cajole and – with luck – fix some new contracts and make some new deals. Eighty per cent of the world's book licences are negotiated here.

Few people have time for lunch. Even over drinks in the evening and at dinner, the talk usually turns on money. This year Spanish publishers are particularly anxious about their Latin American markets. Sales are down in Argentina by 40 per cent as a result of the Malvinas war. No one can get money out of debt-ridden Mexico.

Yet for the book-lover the Frankfurt Book Fair remains a paradise. Eight vast halls overflow with text books, children's books, art books, history books, belles-lettres, religion, maps, photography, music. The place is so vast that free buses run between the halls. Like the sponsored tramcars on the seaside promenade during Blackpool illuminations, these little buses gaudily advertise publishing wares – announcing that Fischer Verlag's pocketbooks are now 30 years old, and so on. On the last day of the Fair I found time to trundle on one of these buses to the art section, in hall eight on the second floor. The impact of that display was overwhelming. Set out like a covered market from Oldham or Covent Garden, the stands displayed not only sumptuous editions but also an almost indigestible cornucopia of drawings, paintings, lithographs and sketches by artists from Rubens to Roy Lichtenstein.

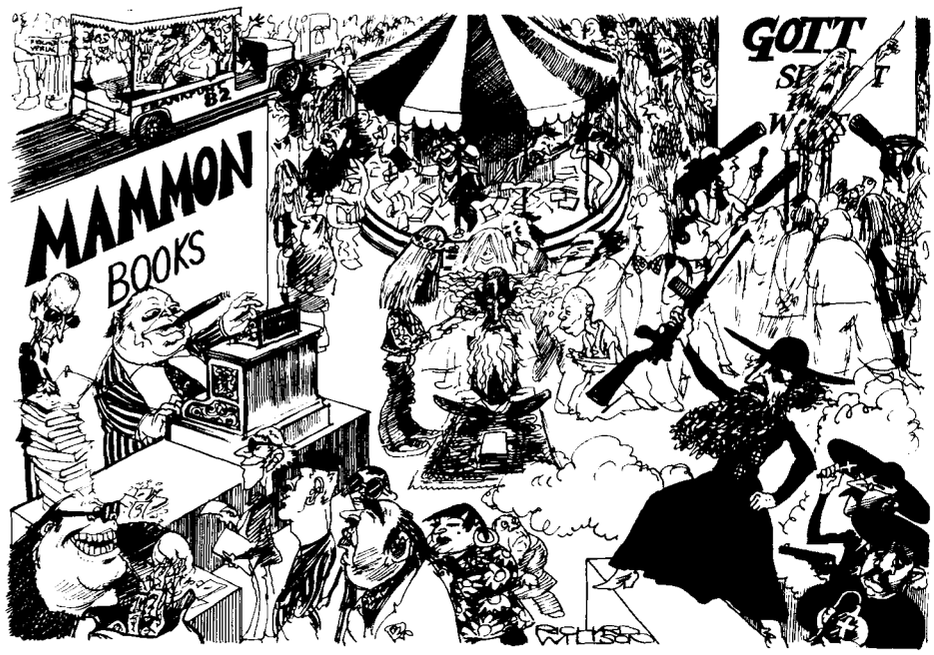
EVERY other year the Book Fair adopts a special theme. Even this is done partly with an eye to the main financial chance. In 1976 the theme was the literature of Latin America. In 1978 the central topic was 'The Child and the Book'. By choosing the theme of Black African literature in 1980 the organisers brilliantly attracted to Frankfurt new Third World publishers, who were there again in some force this year. It would be ridiculously cynical to criticise the publishing world for this kind of behaviour – especially in a time of depression. In the Western world books are for the most part produced by privately financed companies. Many publishers are themselves delightful individuals with a genuine passion for books, willing to take creative literary risks. But they still need to survive. Survival involves exploiting old markets and opening up new ones.

All of which makes even more intriguing the choice of 'Religion' as this year's topic at the Frankfurt Book Fair. One Italian publisher was reported as saying that the organisers chose the topic because only God can save the publishing business. According to Peter Weidhaas, director of the Book Fair, 'To communicate the importance of religion in understanding human existence, to plead for the intervention of religion in the solution of present and future problems: the focal theme of the 34th Frankfurt Book Fair aims at no less and perhaps more.'

One might also add that religious book publishing is obviously once again big business. One star visitor to the Fair, Professor Hans Küng, the dissident Roman Catholic priest from the University of Tübingen, is probably the current best-selling author of the Munich firm of Piper Verlag, not to speak of his British publisher Collins. In spite of his distinctly unpleasant brush with Pope John Paul II, who declared him to be no longer an official 'Catholic' theologian, Küng was in fine form, his international stature scarcely diminished. He has just recorded two television programmes for our Channel 4, in which, for 25 minutes, he talks about religion directly to the camera, without benefit of interviewer or props. Wondering if any British theologian would have been able to do this, I asked Küng how he hoped to hold his television audience. He laughed and replied, 'I think I rely on the fact that I believe passionately in everything I say.'

Some other equally passionate believers have already criticised the way this year's Frankfurt presented the theme of 'religion'. Rosemarie Rauter arranged an exhibition on the topic of 'Yesterday's Religion in Today's World' whose provocative title had offended some Christians even before the Fair opened. Her exhibition was in fact marvellous. Occupying half of hall seven, it displayed 4,220 books submitted by 580 publishers from 35 different countries. Clearly enough, yesterday's religion remains a publishing force in today's world.

This exhibition strikingly revealed how varied is the impact of 20th-century belief. In Rosemary Rauter's part of the Book Fair, at any rate, the notion of religion as something essentially private and other-worldly



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was banished. The exhibition asked whether religion was an incitement to peace or to strife. As Peter Weidhaas observed, when Islamic clergy lead a revolution in Iran and when striking Polish workers fight for democratisation carrying at their head a portrait of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, it is foolish to underestimate the political importance of faith.

IN SPITE of a second exhibition (of some 4,200 titles) on the theme of 'World Religions', some criticised Frankfurt this year for over-representing Christianity in the total programme. They were right. Nonetheless the whole event presented a view of Christianity far removed from my own cosy Sunday School upbringing. Religion as practised by the individual was not neglected. To judge by the proliferation of books, Yoga and meditation and even the call to the monastic life still powerfully attract many people. And publishers still turn out religious books on pastoral care, drug addiction, sexuality, education, illness, dying and suicide. But publishers have now spotted that many people are fascinated (if also repelled) by religious wars. The theology of liberation from Latin America was much on display. And much writing now explores the demands of charity in the social and political context and not simply in the personal sphere.

German irresponsibility in this century has been replaced, in the East as well as in the Federal Republic, by a remarkable sense of social and political responsibility. Some authorities might find the German peace movement something more than an irritant, but publishers have not been slow to publicise it. Young Christians in Germany see peace activists such as Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife, as 20th-century prophets. Some of them at Frankfurt were distributing Camara's appeal to the young in which he criticised the world powers for building up more and more weapons of self-suicide. 'War,' he declares, 'is increasingly senseless and absurd.'

Yet the events of the Book Fair revealed some of the contradictions in Christian thinking at precisely this point. Each day in the huge conference hall the whole of the afternoon was occupied by a continuous seminar on a selected topic connected with religion. I found the notion of spending such a length of time in seminar daunting. But such was the drawing power of the men and women on the platform (and such, perhaps, is the appetite of Germans for this kind of thing) that whenever I visited the conference hall I never found it less than three-quarters full.

On Friday the theme of the seminar was 'Religion and Revolution'. The chairman was Johann Baptist Metz, an Austrian Catholic priest who himself has suffered the displeasure of John Paul II. In contrast with the German Christians for Peace, Metz has found himself increasingly able to say that in today's unjust world Christian charity is perfectly capable of encompassing revolutionary violence.

The following day the theme of the afternoon's seminar was 'The Distant Neighbour'. It was chaired by the Christian Marxist and poet, Dorothee Sölle. The most remarkable speaker of that afternoon was the American Daniel Berrigan. Not everyone present was pleased by what he had to say. 'Much of current religion in America and Europe,' he asserted, 'is a form of psychic amnesia, a deliberate forgetting of the sufferings of the world.' True belief, he said, is 'to walk with that suffering and replace it with a better future'.

Berrigan, of course, was severely punished in the United States for his civil disobedience in opposing the Vietnam War, and he spoke of that experience at Frankfurt. 'We said "We are responsible" and they said "You are guilty",' he told us. 'Our crime was that we were responsible.' Berrigan believes that his experience then may well soon be repeated on a yet more terrifying scale. 'I have the impression that if a nuclear war is declared, it will be legal,' he warned, 'and those who object to and resist that war will be dubbed criminal.' In Berrigan's view, this development is already well on its way.

IN THE end the Frankfurt Book Fair belongs to the publishers. At dinner after the seminar on 'Religion and Revolution' I asked one of the leading platform performers whether publishers are really interested in changing today's world. 'Some books,' he replied, 'no publishers.' So I asked him to name one religious book that had significantly changed anything. 'Well,' he said, 'Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God* helped to make sure that the old Church of England was coming to an end.' If that judgment is correct, Robinson's achievement, while not quite approaching the magnitude of, say, Lenin's *State and Revolution*, is not something to be despised.

As many publications at Frankfurt made perfectly clear, a good many believers throughout the world are not interested in changing church or society at all. Much on display catered for 'Bible belt' religion. A surfeit of books – all of them no doubt profitable for publisher, author and cameraman – were content to 'illustrate' the story of creation or the Psalms by means of superlative nature photographs. Such illustrations, to my mind, enormously weaken the moral force of the original biblical text.

A good many other religious books at Frankfurt this year exist simply to serve the desire of many of us to do our own spiritual thing, however bizarre. It was amusing to see Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* ironically displayed alongside books on astrology, Nostradamus, the occult, Tarot and theosophy.

Yet such books also demonstrate that life and death remain mysterious, and that many men and women are still obsessed with explaining them. Whatever the mixed motives of publishers in producing religious books, it may well be that Frankfurt 1982 indicates that in today's society there exists what Dorothee Sölle claims is 'a new hunger for God'. □

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Most people anticipate, whether with anger or relief, that another Labour government (even with a parliamentary majority) is no more likely to adopt far-reaching Socialist measures than its predecessors of 1964-70 and 1974-79. The ideological or propagandist barriers are being erected in advance, with talk of meaningless slogans, cloudy or windy conference resolutions, and aspirations detached from reality. It's therefore incumbent on serious Socialists to show, by hard argument and factual proof, that what they intend is necessary and feasible. This is the purpose of a new series of short books bearing the collective title 'Arguments for Socialism'.

Inevitably, the quality is variable. The books I've listed first, one on our health services as they are and as they might be, the other on ways of breaking the power of what street-corner orators used to call High Finance, are very good indeed. They are written with force, lucidity and precision. (Both would have been even better if they hadn't been limited to just over 100 pages; they lapse occasionally into breathless summary or brief allusion, but this only shows that the authors are drawing on large reserves of knowledge). Ms Beale's book on women in the trade unions is bright and readable, but descriptive rather than marked by consistent argument. The fourth book, which is about food and farming, strives desperately to be readable and crudely underestimates the intelligence of potential readers; it's packed with ungrammatical sentences, facetious little jokes and excruciating puns, of which the authors seem to be very proud. It also contains more than a reasonable allowance of factual errors, mostly historical or political, none of them important enough to be singled out, but cumulatively irritating.

It's worth explaining why Ms Beale's book presents less than an argument, and indeed evades an essential argument. She is very keen on women being active in unions; she tells us, citing individual experiences, that this activity has enriched otherwise dull and limited lives, and that it has moved male union members, as well as the husbands of the women concerned, toward behaving in a less Andy Capp manner. This is doubtless true, but one can hardly maintain that it's what unions are for. She also tells us that traditional wage bargaining – which is, and will probably continue to be, the central function of a union – is 'quite unable' to resolve the acute problems of women workers, such as differential grading and the inferior position of part-timers.

She adds that union representatives and many of their members join with employers to resist equality for women, and I'm sure this is true too. A woman reader might conclude, therefore, that women would be well advised to steer clear of the unions and concentrate their energies on the feminist movement, or else to form separate unions on the pattern of the National Union of Women Workers, which did a very good job until it was engulfed by general unionism in 1920. I don't myself agree with this conclusion, but I think that Ms Beale should have engaged in argument with it, and this she never attempts. Nor does she have much to say about Socialism, or about the possible status either of women or of trade unions in a Socialist society.

Mr Thunhurst's great merit is that he argues from his first page to his last for a view of health – positive health, not mere absence of identifiable illness – based on an understanding of the logic of capitalism and the potentialities of Socialism. Whether he writes about nutrition, about environmental pollution, about the aetiology of diseases, or about psychological stress, he makes irrefutable connections with an economic system based on exploitation. Health is a subject, above all others, which it's easy to isolate from broad political doctrine (in fact, I'm probably doing my bit of isolating by calling it a distinct 'subject'). Easy, too, for the well-meaning progressive to wage sectional battles for better maternity services, or less lead in petrol, or the phasing-out of pay-beds; or to monitor the endless struggle between the spending departments and the Treasury.

Mr Thunhurst gives due weight to all these matters, and due credit to what the National Health Service has achieved as an advance on the previous dispensation, but he insists that there are limits to what can be achieved as long as good health is neither a primary value nor an unfettered purpose of society. If I didn't know about the deep-rooted power of prejudice and the innate resistance to logic, I'd say that it would be impossible to read this book without being convinced that anyone who really cares

Keith Bosley

Curfew

The city sleeps
as though drugged:
no straggler
disturbs the streets

into a dream
for this is
the curfew
and the streetlamps

are the light-bulbs
of a vast
hospital
where the patient

was kept too long
sedated
who upon
waking became

violent and had
to be put
under all
over again.

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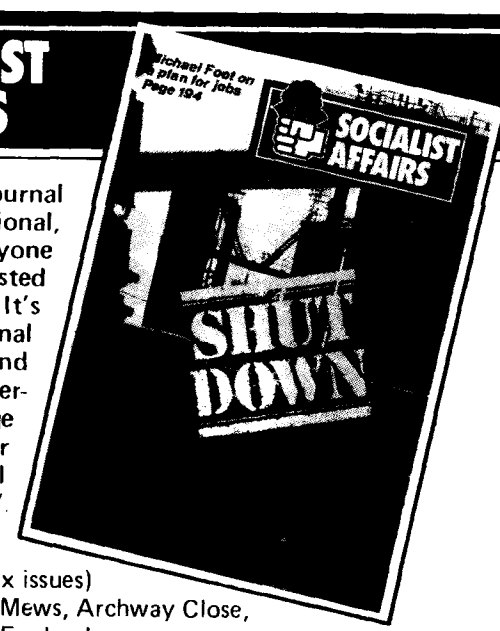

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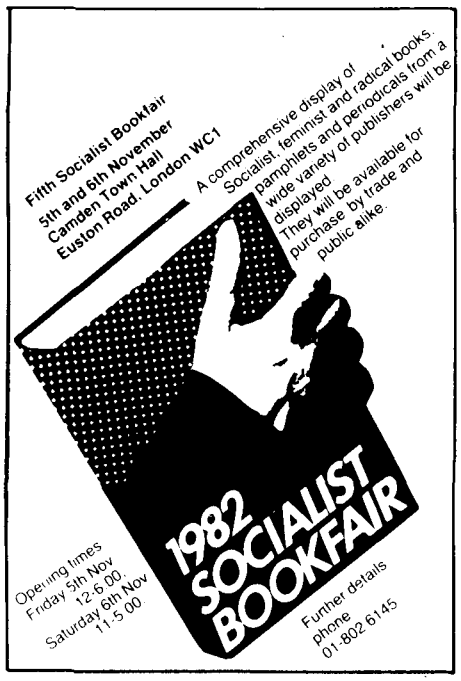
about health must be a Socialist – which is of course the aim of the argument. Incidentally, he has a few interesting things to say about what we might learn (despite the obvious differences between developing and industrialised nations) from health services in China, Cuba and Mozambique. Space prevents him from enlarging on the theme, but perhaps he'll be encouraged to write another book about it.

Mr Minns' book about the City, and what to do with it, has a similar breadth of vision and a similar intellectual consistency; in other words, it's not about the City as an odd corner of national life which could do with control and cleaning-up, but about contrasting concepts of the use of resources. Britain is unique among capitalist countries for the weight given to financial, as against industrial, interests; for the concentration of financial power (the USA and Germany have far more competing banks); and, one may add, for the mystique that surrounds financial rituals, almost in the same way as the monarchy and the Army. One of the strengths of British capitalism is its smooth absorption of the heritage of feudalism, exemplified in the snob-value of titles in City boardrooms. This must be a reason, among other reasons, why Labour leaders from Cripps to Wilson have shied away from meddling with the banks and insurance companies, while Mitterrand can treat them with casual irreverence.

Mr Minns, when advancing positive policies, didn't convince me at every point; even though finance houses hold controlling interests over most major industrial enterprises, I doubt if nationalising the former would ensure a recognisable degree of Socialism in the latter, and surely it would be no guarantee of democratic management or working-class ascendancy. Still, since Labour conferences vote cheerfully to take over this or that industry, and let their boldness ebb away when it comes to the banks, Mr Minns is justified in directing his argument as he does.

Finally, the fact that only two per cent of British workers are in agriculture (far more are in food production) ought not to obscure the important social and political issues that stem from the dinner-table and the supermarket, discussed in *More Than We Can Chew*. If you can swallow the style, this book too has valuable things to say. □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Among this week's contributors:

JAMES BENTLEY is the author of *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain, Cry God for England* and *Between Marx and Christ*. He has been Vicar of Oldham, Senior Chaplain at Eton and Maurice Beckett Research Fellow in Christian Social Thought at the University of Sussex.

MERVYN JONES's most recent novel is *Two Women and Their Men* (Deutsch, 1982). As well as being the author of a number of novels and non-fiction works, Mervyn Jones has also worked as Assistant Editor of *Tribune* and of the *New Statesman*.

DAVID GILMOUR'S *Dispossessed: The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980* has just become available in paperback from Sphere.

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PUBLISHING

David Berry

Ten years in the red

WHEN Glenn Thompson got on a bus in Camden Town in 1972 en route for Turin, he did not know that it was also to be the first step in one of the most successful publishing coups of the Seventies. He worked with the fledgling publisher, the Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, and had heard of an interesting Spanish manuscript which could be bought in Italy. That manuscript, *Marx for Beginners*, has now sold over one million copies world-wide and has generated a whole series of Beginners Books – Lenin, Freud, etc. Nowadays, Thompson is more at home on a jumbo jet than on a transalpine coach. Radical publishing has come of age.

Ten years ago there were three 'radical' publishers, that is publishers whose main aim was to make available political books from the Left. Lawrence and Wishart was long established as the Communist Party's publishing house. Merlin was formed in the Fifties and had ties with the Labour Party, and New Left Books had developed out of the *New Left Review* in the late Sixties. Now there are 30 radical publishers, the largest of which, Pluto Press, turned over £400,000 last year, and that's not counting Virago or the Women's Press, two newish and highly successful feminist publishers.

WHAT happened was that in the Seventies in Britain there emerged a political and commercial space for new kinds of books, socialist non-fiction paperbacks primarily, that were to sell better than at any time except during the Thirties. Meantime, commercial publishing was having a dreadful decade. The impact of paperback publishing, the final collapse of the British cultural empire which guaranteed overseas sales for British books, cuts in higher education and libraries: all these produced a crisis in publishing which led to emphasis on safe books for a guaranteed market.

Penguin continued to publish well-researched, radical non-fiction, although in the early Seventies they closed down their innovative education series. In academic publishing, firms like Hutchinson, Routledge and Macmillan rushed out any book with 'Marx' or, later, 'feminism' in the title with almost indecent haste. But in the solid middle ground very few radical titles were produced by commercial publishers. And into this market gap came two kinds of radical publishers – independent firms like Pluto, Writers and Readers, Allison and Busby, etc., publishing short-run paperbacks, and campaigning publishers like the NCCL and the Friends of the Earth,

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producing reports marketed in attractive booklet form. These publishers were linked with pressure groups or movements, but not with political parties. And their market was the new professionals and activists – radical social workers, teachers, white collar trade unionists.

As Robert Multuno from Zed Press put it to me, 'We started Zed Press because there simply weren't books published about the "Third World" by activists and intellectuals in the countries themselves.' But the British market is unfortunately quite small. And Charles Foster from NCCL said, 'Our pamphlets are cheap, well designed and right up to date. We could wait for a commercial publisher to publish some of our work – but by then it will have lost its political effect.'

THESE publishers are, like commercial publishers, by and large metropolitan based, but another recent development, again with parallels in the Thirties, has been the rise of radical bookshops in the provinces. London has always had its shops like Collets (dating back to the 1890s), Housemans (the Thirties) and the early Peace News. But now there are 120 radical bookshops in large towns outside London. And they, too, were founded because of an obvious gap. British book-selling is one of the more conservative trades.

It is dominated outside London by the chains – W.H. Smith, Menzies, Hudsons, etc. – or by small independent shops, the former geared to fast books like fast food (though changes are coming at last) and the latter ruled by a kind of cultural snobbery.

Two kinds of radical shops appeared. Political bookshops were opened in most cities by leftists outside the Labour party in order to provide literature and a meeting place for extra-parliamentary activity. Grass Roots Books in Manchester, for example, was started ten years ago by libertarians in a university annexe. It is now in the city centre and employs ten people ('Not on union wages, unfortunately'). Bookmarks in north London grew out of the Socialist Workers Party book-stall. They now run the largest left book club, a trade union book service and the enterprising Socialist Book Fair – coming up again next week. 'Sure,' said Tamara Kalom, 'we're an SWP shop, but we also service the general Left, as you can see from our stock.'

And in areas like Hackney, Milton Keynes and Avon, 'community' bookshops were opened – often with Arts Council grants – primarily in order to provide books for the local community in general.

It is often difficult now to tell the two kinds of shops apart. They all provide meeting places for the local Left, either formally like Wedge in Coventry or informally like the Bookplace in Peckham. And in the last ten years they have become firmly established, though still with precarious financial health.

It is now possible to speak of a radical book trade. As well as bookshops and publishers, there are now distributors, marketing agencies and consultants and a trade journal: the *Radical Bookseller* [co-edited by the author of this article]. The Communist Party's Central Books was joined in the Seventies by two new distributors: Publications Distribution Co-operative and Third World Publications. Keith Smith, a director of the latter, told us: 'Distribution is the key for radical publishing today. We are faced with monopoly suppliers like Bookwise who don't take our books. So we've had to do it ourselves.' His book, *Marketing for Small Publishers* (Interaction Imprint, 15 Wilkin St, London NW 5, £3.50), has become a classic for the radical book-trade and can even be seen in the marketing offices of Penguin.

Ten years on, the difficulties faced by the radical book-trade are no longer in the area of selling well written, radical non-fiction, but in challenging the commercial book-trade at its own game: the staples of the best-seller list, TV-tie-ins, guide-books, etc. Ink Links collapsed last year after risking all their finance on a 1981 year book. Pluto have co-published *The State of the World* atlas with Pan and a children's diary with the *Observer*. This year, Virago announced that, after five years of independence, they were joining the Chatto group. And a publishing skirmish has been going on between the radical publishers and Penguin to get the contract for the Socialist Societies publishing programme. A very different ten years in the red is on its way. □

New Left Review 135

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Michèle Berrett and Mary McIntosh

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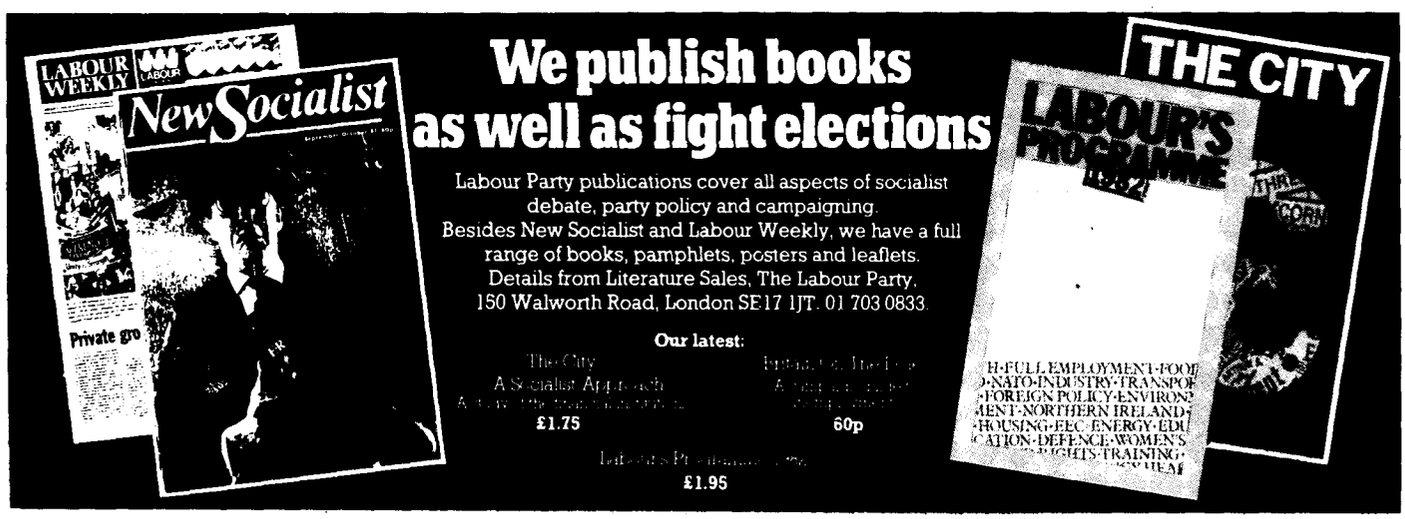
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SPAIN
David Gilmour

Reacting to the Right

Spain 1808-1975
RAYMOND CARR *Oxford* £19.50 & £9.95
The Spanish Civil War
ANTONY BEEVOR *Orbis* £12
The Transition to Democracy in Spain
JOSE MARAVALL *Croom Helm* £14.95

Conservatives often claim that in parliamentary democracies the centre ground is always moving to the left. The socialist goal is clear and unchanging, and a country which from time to time elects socialist governments is bound to move steadily if unevenly towards it.

This is not a complaint that is heard very much in Spain. There it is the Right which is rigid and immovable, and the Left which accommodates to changing situations. The ideology of the Spanish Right is remarkable in its constancy. Carlists who in the 1830s were willing to fight for an absolute monarchy and an Inquisitorial Church were prepared to die for the same causes a hundred years later. Falangists eager for a nationalist-syndicalist state in the 1930s are still promoting the idea today.

Since the behaviour of the Right is always predictable, the course of Spanish politics depends on the reactions of the Left. In the century before the Civil War the Left (and in the context of the 19th-century political struggles one must place all opponents of the Carlists, even the liberal conservatives, in this category) was always in a majority. Its failure to establish an effective system of government led to the dictatorships of Primo de Rivera and General Franco.

The Liberal failure is the chief theme of Raymond Carr's magnificent book recently reprinted with five concise chapters on the Franquista regime. For 35 years after the death of Ferdinand VII the squabbling Liberal politicians of rival factions tried and failed to build a liberal monarchical system around his worthless daughter Isabella. But the politicians of the First Republic were no better and they too 'proved incapable of sinking their differences, personal and ideological, in order to form a strong Republican government'.

Much the same could be said of the failure of the Second Republic (1931-6) although it was then the socialists who were primarily to blame. In his book **The Transition to Democracy in Spain** José Maravall recognises the twin 'souls' of the Socialist Party (PSOE), 'a "Utopian soul" which defended revolutionary objectives and a "realistic soul" which pursued reformist practices'. The failure of attempts to reconcile the opposing wings of the party did much to discredit the Popular Front government before and during the Civil War.

ANTONY BEEVOR, in his readable history of the war, regards the rivalries within the Republican side as a major factor in its defeat. 'The Nationalists defended a common view of the past; the Republican coalition, in contrast, had widely different visions of the future.' But he apportions blame less to the divided socialists than to the Communist Party which he regards, probably rightly, as the chief villain on the Republican side. Communist behaviour was often deplorable and the author relentlessly describes the worst of it: the ruthless campaign the party waged against its 'enemies' on the Republican side and its liquidation of many of them by means of the Russian-run security services, the *Servicio de Investigación Militar*.

While criticism of the Communist role is entirely justified, the author's denunciations of the party are somewhat obsessive. It is hardly as if he is uncovering something we did not already know. It is, after all, 45 years since Kingsley Martin refused to publish Orwell's attacks on communist behaviour in Barcelona in May 1937 and all the world knows about it now. Besides, Beevor's single-minded pursuit of the Communist Party leads him to attack a number of social democratic and republican leaders who sided with the communists against their anarchist opponents merely because they realised that a centralised and authoritarian government was needed to win the war. The author has amassed some hefty evidence against the prime minister Negrín, who has generally enjoyed a good press among historians, but he is unfairly dismissive of the socialist leader Prieto and the republican president Manuel Azaña, whom he wrongly accuses of participating in the attempted revolution of October 1934. Negrín, Prieto and Azaña all made bad mistakes but each of them possessed political talent that no one in the post-Franco era has yet matched.

More books have been written about the Spanish civil war than about any comparable event and it is as difficult to say something original about it as it is to say something new about Napoleon. This is not a strikingly original work but it is nevertheless a useful study of the war with clear descriptions of the military operations.

JOSE MARAVALL, by contrast, covers ground that has barely been touched in English. His is a sensible, rather pedestrian book that discusses the problems of the post-Franco era and compares them intelligently with the difficulties faced by the Second Republic. Maravall recognises that it is the Left which has been largely responsible for the success of the transition. The Socialist Party is not the divided party of the 1930s. Its 'realistic soul' has triumphed and prepared it to accept the political responsibility which Largo Caballero refused in 1936.

Those who get to the end of this book will have learned a good deal about the transition, for Maravall's judgments are usually sound. But they will have had to wade through the full horrors of professional sociological jargon. Worse still, they will have been confronted by incomprehensible graphs, sliding scales of political opinions and something called an instability index. The whole paraphernalia is of course quite unnecessary because Maravall would have reached the same conclusions even if he had never seen an instability index. It is ridiculous to think that any people's political behaviour – perhaps least of all the Spaniards' – can be subjected to so-called scientific laws and measured with bogus instruments.

The note on the cover states baldly that José Maravall is Professor of Political Sociology at the University of Madrid. It should have added that he is a leading young intellectual of the Socialist Party and a member of its executive committee. The reader would then have understood why the PSOE is treated at such length and with such indulgence, why the Communist Party and the UCD are so effectively dissected, and why the *Partido Socialista Popular*, a rival socialist party in the 1977 elections, is barely mentioned. □

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Heart of the River
CAROLYN SLAUGHTER *Granada* £8.95

A.N. Wilson writes with a wittily precise, almost heartless irony, and a sort of dispassionate zest. His characters are like specimens to be impaled upon pins with a slow, entomological glee – or to be smeared upon a slide for casual inspection under the microscope. **Wise Virgin** is clever, calculated and very funny. The first pages describe a proposal of marriage by a young woman to a fastidious fellow in his late forties, whom, we are told, is two marriages down already. The laconic concluding sentence of the opening section is typical of Wilson's meticulous style:

> It was the striking sequel to an interview which had begun, as usual, with the arrival of Miss Agar at Hermit Street to help with the transcription of a medieval tract on virginity.

What Wilson cunningly withholds is that the man, Giles Fox, has not – as I think we expect – had his previous marriages annulled in a court of law. One wife has died in childbirth; the other has been bumped off by a careless taxi. And Fox himself, it transpires, has gone blind in the promiscuous interval between wives. These unfortunate mishaps, as Wilson makes them seem, lull the reader into sympathy with our medieval scholar, while the writer pokes under our noses for a second the fact that his claims to scholarship are somewhat suspect. Instead, we are taken up with the irony that a mildly licentious and godless academic has been picked on by an acolyte whose interest in the tract is far more than linguistic: she is the virgin of the title, although hardly wise. There is a richly comic scene in which Fox, hoping for a dirty weekend in Cambridge, finds himself helplessly parked among Miss Agar's pals, who prattle enthusiastically about the Church, and put too much vinegar on their lettuce.

Wilson saves the fate of Fox's treasured manuscript for the close of this hilariously understated novel. He rarely misses a trick, although I am a mite dubious about the subplot, involving the surrender of Fox's daughter's virginity to a puffed-up public schoolboy, Piers Peverill. Piers' housemaster is Fox's brother-in-law, and the school is 'Pangham' in 'Wiltshire'. For 'Pangham,' read Rugby, down to the last particle of argot, and some quick in-jokes. I discover, after some nasty *déja vu*, that A.N. Wilson and I are contemporaries when it comes to schooling, and I rather wonder what outsiders will make of the more obscure detail. Its inclusion seems clever in the wrong sense for a writer whose wits are so firmly secure about him.

In Wilson's *The Healing Art*, a character thinks of God as 'some clever old fellow of All Souls'. In Bernard Malamud's **God's Grace**, He appears to the sole survivor of the nuclear holocaust 'through a glowing crack in a bulbous black cloud,' and lectures him like an unusually platitudinous magistrate. The lucky, or luckless, last man on earth is one Calvin Cohn, who has studied for the rabbinate, but given it up in favour of paleology. The cause of his escape is the fact that he was in a diving bell on the ocean-bed when the Big Bang happened. Cohn is subsequently plonked by Malamud on a desert island, where he becomes not so much a Crusoe as a kosher Dr Doolittle. His only soulmates are a talking chimp, a morose gorilla, and sundry other apes to whom he expands upon theories of the cosmos, and who are forced to observe the Passover. The novel is wildly funny, and utterly unlike Malamud's other work. A fable it may be, *à la Lord of the Flies*, but its pleasures lie in the absurdity of the treatment, rather than in the underlying moral. It seems rather predictable that the apes will ultimately go man, and start beating each other's brains out after Cohn, who marries and mates with one of the few females, has taught them the rudiments of civilisation. Set a tale in a ramshackle paradise after the world's been wiped out, and it's a safe bet that the sins will be little more than original. This is better read as a madcap and endlessly inventive spoof, with the solemn Cohn teaching his primate paramour the plot of *Romeo amd Juliet*, and leading seminars on such essential questions as 'Do you think of life as having a particular purpose? What is it? Please answer responsively.'

The central figure in Roy A.K. Heath's **Kwaku** is also familiar: the hare-brained and impulsive fool with more energy than sense who cons his way to success – here, as a faith-healer. Kwaku Cholmondeley has the gift of the Guyanan gab, and the saga of his quest for the Easy Life is highly entertaining. The patois is rich – a paradise of cartwheeling words and images. What is also memorable, salutary, and properly dispiriting is that this particular rogue is not allowed by his creator to get away with his fantasies. Carolyn Slaughter, on the other hand, lets her heroine off the hook in **Heart of the River.** This is the rather captivating story of Constance, returning after her marriage has failed to an East Africa where she had her first brush with love. The novel depends upon too much love at first sight to be really convincing, but there is more than enough in the character of Constance to absorb a reader who doesn't mind having his heartstrings played like a harp (I'm soft enough). The plot is always sufficiently unpredictable, and the writer's hand just steady enough with the syrup-spoon to remain engaging. □

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The Man Who Was H.M. Bateman

ANTHONY ANDERSON *Webb & Bower* £9.95

Best remembered for his 'The Man Who . . .' cartoons – in which social or sporting gaffes provoke seismic convulsions of outrage and indignation among the assembled company – H. M. Bateman is our great master of the apoplectic: 'Disgusted, Bournemouth' snarls forever in the florid line of his pen and the rich tans and oranges of his colour work. His is a splenetic world of bulging eyeballs, gnashing molars and angry acquiline features, in which shrunken, clerk-like figures excite the wrath of steely ladies in pearls and their brilliantined, pencil-moustached spouses, and the infuriated are hurled backwards into the air by the force of their emotions, as though electrocuted: small wonder that one of his most successful books – appropriately introduced by Harry Graham – was entitled *Colonels*, or that he relished life in Reigate and its neighbouring golf clubs.

Despite the 'wild exactitude' of his art – G.K. Chesterton's admiring phrase – Bateman himself seems to have been dour to the point of misanthropy, and bafflingly laconic: when the author of this handsomely illustrated if over-long account stumbled across some diaries, he was disappointed to find most entries restricted to 'Phlegm', 'Paid Sunday papers, 3/9', 'Very wet and cold' and the like. Born in 1887, Bateman grew up in the Wellsian world of the London suburbs: his first work was published when he was 15, and from then on he devoted himself with admirable if uncongenial intensity to his art, taking time off for fishing and a lifelong addiction to tap-dancing. Family life took the strain, still more so when his natural reticence was fuelled by a nagging miserliness (including an obsessive loathing for the activities of the Inland Revenue). His wife finally upped sticks in 1946, after he'd wrecked his eldest daughter's 18th birthday party on the grounds that too many matches had been employed in lighting the cake.

Although Bateman's early work was largely devoted to the vagaries of suburban life, he was much influenced after World War One by the French cartoonist Caran d'Ache and by the German magazine *Simplicissimus*; and his subsequent work is oddly un-English in its ferocity and its surrealist delight in following lunatic logic to its inevitable end (man goes on the rampage with a vacuum cleaner; sucks up the cat, his wife, a steamroller and a military band before eventually disappearing down the nozzle himself). Anthony Anderson is excellent on Bateman the artist, and the nuts and bolts of his trade; but he gives us far too much from his somewhat leaden writings, and far too much routine period background. Bateman gave up cartoons at the height of his fame in the 1930s in order to concentrate on 'serious' art; and judging by the samples reproduced, he was pretty adept at that too. Although it's hard to warm to the old curmudgeon, it's good to know that when his daughter went through his suits after his death in Gozo in 1970, she found in each one a small stub of pencil 'sharpened and ready for use'.

Jeremy Lewis

The Other Britain

ed. PAUL BARKER *Routledge* £9.95 & £4.95

New Society was born just before Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1963) and Geoffrey Moorhouse's *The Other England* (1964) appeared as Penguin Specials. *The Other Britain*, which marks *New Society's* 20th birthday (and may there be many more), bears a strong family resemblance, and not just in name, to those two teenagers.

Michael Harrington described the economic underworld of American life. Geoffrey Moorhouse set out to explore England outside the Golden Circle, 'whose perimeter is approximately one hour's travel by fast peak-hour train from the main London termini'. Both found a good deal of poverty. Harrington's book was reprinted ten times in five years and his publishers claimed that *The Other America* sparked the War on Poverty. Moorhouse reckoned that 'the North-East has more poverty than any other part of England'. In 'Making Ends Meet', one of the earliest (1973) of the 33 essays by twenty hands in *The Other Britain*, Paul Harrison comments – after talking to four Gateshead families – that 'the basic experience of life for poor people is almost unimaginable for those who are not subject to the same constraints'.

It is the variety of constraints and pressures, the diversity of beliefs and habits, ways of coping and ways of getting a kick out of life, that come home forcefully through the transparent empathy of these cameos. From the older witnesses there is a great sense of loss, and the growth of a multiracial society has brought obvious new strains and identity problems: 'The true Brummie wears a shamrock in his turban.'

In the struggle for survival and dignity many millions are in the front line. Rosina, a self-styled 'business girl', sees herself performing a service: 'If a man's not got an outlet he'll lose his head'. Dr Norman Beenstock, in physically neglected Hyde on the Pennine foothills, finds more hypchondria, more anxiety, more depression, because of the economic climate; and down the mines in South Yorkshire, where absenteeism is high, 'You try having a shit lying on your side in two inches of water.'

In his introduction, Paul Barker lists the advantages of print over TV journalism: nevertheless, reading *The Other Britain* is like watching four hours of documentary television comprising 33 seven-minute items. We are whisked the length and breadth of the Kingdom – from Aberdeen to Padstow, Belfast to Southampton. We meet – all too briefly – one of the two coloured men in the Ulster Defence Association, and the man who is probably London's leading ex-Israeli anarchist. We meet vegetarians, octogenarians, skinheads and kamikaze racing drivers. Indeed, this book – which is strong on youth sub-cultures and weak on rural Britain – imparts the best kind of knowledge: knowledge of other people.

Robert Hutchison

London after the Bomb

OWEN GREENE, BARRY RUBIN, NEIL TUROK, PHILIP WEBBER and GRAEME WILKINSON *Oxford* £1.95

Nuclear Deterrence: Implications and Policy Options for the 1980s

ed. M. R. DANDO and B. R. NEWMAN *Castle House Publications* £15

The emergence of specialist professional disarmament groups is an important asset to today's peace movement. Among the most active of these groups has been Scientists Against Nuclear Arms, five of whose members wrote *London after the Bomb*. This is a scrupulously researched and horrific account of what would have become of Londoners had the 1980 'Square Leg' war-game taken place in reality. It is also a cogent critique of the would-be reassuring deceptions promulgated by the Home Office in publications such as *Domestic Nuclear Shelters*. CND groups please send copies to local MPs, councillors and Emergency Planning Officers.

Nonetheless, insofar as this book may strengthen the current over-emphasis which the disarmament movement is placing on the issue of civil defence, one is obliged to mention its limitations. To emphasise the destructiveness of nuclear weapons is not in itself to refute the case for deterrence. And, in our natural concern for our own survival, we should never forget – but *London after the Bomb* barely touches on this – that we too are planning to incinerate entire populations.

Nuclear Deterrence, the published proceedings of a conference held last autumn, does address itself to the strategic issues. Contributions from disarmers and military men illustrate the difficulty of dialogue between people who begin from irreconcilable premises, and some of the more reflective pieces examine the premises themselves. But the academic contributions are of uneven interest, and some of those by American experts display a familiar blend of pretentious 'sophistication' and scandalous naivety. J. R. Cerami, a Captain who teaches at West Point, wonders whether the inhibitions of deterrence may not have 'a deleterious impact on the viability of the military institution'. In order to prevent the American sword from rusting in its scabbard, Cerami suggests mounting 'selective military interventions in Third World troublespots'. So now we know: wars are necessary lest soldiers forget how to kill.

M. H. Ryle

BECKETT'S GHOSTLY HEROINE

in *Ill Seen Ill Said* gives the reader much to puzzle, much to enjoy, in a lucidly poetic, major short novel (£4.95). A Swiss voice in a startling but beautiful novel, *Stones or The Destruction of the Child Karl and Other Characters* by Erica Pedretti, inaugurates the Swiss Library and introduces an important contemporary writer. The narrator, writing a novel, makes discoveries about herself and the motivations of those around her as literary discovery merges with her observation (£6.95). *Pélagie-la-Charrette* by Antonine Maillet is a Prix Goncourt-winning family saga, starting with the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755, a black page of British history (£6.95). *Lillelord*, a masterly turn-of-the-century evocation of youth in a comfortable Norwegian family by Johan Borgen, is a key work of Scandinavian literature (£8.95). Two important reprints are a new edition of *The Naked Lunch* (£3.95), including the acrimonious twenty-year-old "Ugh" correspondence, the longest ever in the *Times Lit. Supp.*, and *The Wild Boys* (£3.95), both key works by William Burroughs, America's most controversial and eye-opening novelist.

MORE OPERA GUIDES

to increase the pleasure and knowledge of opera-goers in the ENO and ROH series: new titles are *Carmen, La Bohème, Tosca, Rigoletto, Boris Godunov, Flying Dutchman, Pelléas and Mélisande*, and *Falstaff*. In addition to two-language libretto, the Opera Guides contain informative articles, thematic guide, wonderful illustrations, and other features (each £2). *Traditions of the Classical Guitar*, Graham Wade's fascinating history of the instrument, its makers, performers and repertoire is now in paperback (£4.95). *Maurice Ravel* by H. H. Stuckenschmidt, a standard study of his life and work, also in paperback (£3.95). Howard Barker, one of our most brilliant political playwrights, in *The Hang of the Gaol* (volume includes another play, *Heaven*) exposes the hypocrisy behind our political institutions and civil service (£4.95). *Journal of Beckett Studies 7* is now available (£5). *The Fenians in England 1865-1872* by Patrick Quinlivan and Paul Rose graphically describes the Victorian anti-Irish hysteria and last public hanging (£10.95).

JOHN CALDER 18 Brewer Street London W1

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DESIGN
Jules Lubbock

Not just a pretty body

The Car Programme
Boilerhouse, USA

'You're looking at the dashboard of the new Ford Sierra Ghia, it's more than just another efficient family car, it's a car for the open road. The cockpit feels as if it was made for you. Overhead there's an aircraft style console which houses a pair of swivelling map lights – Man and Machine in Total Harmony.' (Ad. in the *Economist*.) In the Sunday sups. the car reverts to the efficient family car: 'Much has been written of the new Ford Sierra from the driver's point of view. But what if you're the passenger? Don't you deserve as much consideration as the man behind the wheel?' If ambiguity is the defining characteristic of a great work of art, then the Sierra is a masterpiece.

Take the body shape. The exhibition shows, without mentioning Citroen by name, how Ford was influenced by the aerodynamic profile of the Citroen GS. Unfortunately the Citroen was 'fat', and fat means feminine, or, to middle managers who drive such cars, poncey; in the words of Ford's chief designer the problem was to design an aerodynamic car which combined 'gentleness, tautness and strength', and this was accomplished by marrying the strong bludgeon shape of the senior executive's Rover 3500 which he admires with the gentle Citroen. He then added a dashboard, not unlike that of the BMW, which wraps around the 'man behind the wheel' to make him feel important by giving air-vents and cassette radio the appearance of computer modules. The result is a car which can be perceived as masculine by male drivers, who are in the majority, and as not-unfeminine by women drivers whose importance increases when the car reaches the secondhand market.

'The Car Programme' is the first public exhibition ever to reveal the pains taken by the Design Division of a major multinational to generate exactly the right mixture of metaphors for maximum market penetration. The story is told in countdown style from Ford's decision to cease production of the bestselling but old-fashioned Cortina, which was losing its market share because drivers wanted a car which looked sporty and aerodynamically sophisticated. The Design Team's job was to visualise a product with these and many other specifications, using the traditional skills of a Michelangelo or Rodin to sculpt full-size clay models, several of which are on view.

THE BOILERHOUSE approach to industrial design is refreshingly realistic, but it altogether exaggerates the importance of visual design in relation to economic, environmental and social considerations.

Cash, above all, is the name of the game. The catalogue tells us that Ford have decided that they cannot compete with the Japanese on the production costs of basic cars. Whereas a medium-sized car like the Sierra costs little more to produce than a mini it can be sold for much more. Consumer research showing that the public thought the Sierra model looked £1200 more expensive than it really was clinched Ford's decision to produce it. Here certainly is a lesson for British Leyland, sadly too late, since their market share is set to fall from 18 per cent to 10 per cent as a result of Edwardes's catastrophic mismanagement in failing to bring forward the launch of just such a medium-range car!

Ford's refusal to allow their competitors to be named in the show prevents us from learning that in shape and style the Sierra and its major rival, General Motor's Vauxhall Cavalier, are virtually indistinguishable, down to the BMW dashboard. The rule is, then, that if a car lacks the necessary visuals it will be uncompetitive in a given market sector, but that design is not a sufficient precondition for success. In fact the Sierra's real advantage depends upon 'cost of ownership' – running costs plus depreciation. And here Ford scores on one feature only, which has nothing to do with visual design – servicing costs.

In Britain private individuals cannot afford new cars. Eighty per cent of new Sierras will be bought by hire and company fleets, whose managers are coldly indifferent both to styling and to advertising hype, but for whom £100 extra service costs per car makes a difference of hundreds of thousands of pounds to profits and cash flow. Add to this Ford's sourcing of car assembly in low-cost countries like Spain, and their labyrinthine financial arrangements for taking profits in low corporation tax countries like Britain, and the role of visual design begins to take its place in the system.

It is clear, moreover, that where public opinion is informed multinationals are highly vulnerable to political control. With the Sierra Ford have taken account of safety and environmental legislation projected 15 years ahead. If our regulations on, say, leaded petrol were as strict as those in the US they would comply. This can be inferred from the catalogue; it needs to be broadcast. Likewise with the sourcing of production. Within one month of the TGWU's decision to black imports from Spain of Vauxhall's S-Car, and their threat to deal similarly with Ford, Ford have promised to reduce imports from 50 per cent to 35 per cent of British sales, and to restore production of the Escort to Halewood, well in advance of the Cabinet's 'E' committee meeting this Thursday to explore ways of introducing import controls. No wonder Ford are secretive.

Returning to the 'man behind the wheel': two-thirds of all households in the UK have the use of a car, but two-thirds of households in the rented sector, of unskilled manual workers, of old-aged pensioners have no car at all. At issue is not simply the unequal distribution of wealth, but the way car ownership exacerbates the unequal distribution of resources, by reducing public transport revenues, and by attracting an unfair share of government subsidy. As a perk Sierras and Cavaliers cost their drivers about £500 in additional taxation in return for a benefit worth £2500. Probably no form of transport, least of all the private car, can survive without subsidy, yet the electors of Sierraland were able to scupper the GLC's Fare's Fair policy.

I ADMIRE the gusto with which the Boilerhouse has set about teaching British industry a lesson in design. In nine months it has done more than the government's own Design Council has done in 30 years. But industrial design cannot and should not be treated as a purely aesthetic matter in isolation from the broader issues. Ford should have been told that the Boilerhouse demanded complete editorial independence. Of course I recognise that this might be asking too much from a foundation funded by Terence Conran's design empire, which obviously shares with Ford an interest in focussing the attention of the public upon the gleaming showroom model, the consumer product, while barring them from the gate which leads to the hidden foci of production and finance. The Boilerhouse Foundation is, however, a public charity, closely associated with a publicly funded national museum and if the public is to gain control over its social product, the Boilerhouse must be more than the servant of corporate capitalism. □

OPERA
Andrew Clements

Power struggle

Khovanshchina
Covent Garden; further performances October 29, November 1, 4 & 8

It is ten years since Musorgsky's most ambitious opera was last seen at the Royal Opera House. The 1963 production has now been revived three times, and that is probably an accurate measure of the opera's popularity and success: it has a place on the fringe of the repertory, hedged about with problems that begin long before the work ever reaches the stage. Musorgsky devoted himself to *Khovanshchina* in the decade up to his death in 1881, a project suggested to him by his collaborator Stasov as a complement to the earlier *Boris Godunov*. Where *Boris* was a nationalist opera that, for all its splendour and scope, was essentially about single historical figures, *Khovanshchina* was to set itself a greater task – portraying the Russian people as a whole at a crucial moment in their history, when the old Muscovy order gave way to the new Russia of Peter the Great.

Musorgsky and Stasov took great liberties with historical events and chronologies in fashioning their 'opera in six scenes'. His-

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torical figures of the 1680s were retained, as was the clash of religions between the Old Believers and the new Russian orthodoxy. But dates are elided, characters combined. The libretto should have been a model of concise dramaturgy; it was to be naturalism that counted. Yet the result is more a series of historical panels than a cogent basis for a musical setting. There is much to which Musorgsky the composer can respond magnificently, and equally much for which he could not possibly create a continuity, though the action of the opera is not as incomprehensible as some commentators would have one believe.

More disastrously, however, Musorgsky died before completing *Khovanshchina*. Two scenes lacked an ending; only some short passages had been orchestrated. Rimsky-Korsakov characteristically took over the task of preparing his fellow nationalist's score for the stage, and equally characteristically, he took a cavalier attitude to the original, filling out and 'civilising' some of the barer passages in Musorgsky's harmonies, making extensive cuts in the name of dramatic exigency, and providing music of his own for those points that needed finishing off. In this over-tidy version the opera was performed for over 50 years, though a vocal score based entirely on Musorgsky's manuscripts was published in the 1930s. Shostakovich's reworking appeared in 1959, and it is this version of the opera that Covent Garden has used in the present production.

Shostakovich remained remarkably faithful to the letter of Musorgsky's music as presented in the authentic vocal score and, crucially, to its implied sound. What we know of Musorgsky's orchestration, when we are allowed to hear it unadulterated, seems very close to what we find in Shostakovich's *Khovanshchina* with its fondness for sombre, muted colours and piercing economy of means. The programme for this revival contained one curiosity, for it claimed that some of Rimsky-Korsakov's cuts had been incorporated as well. If such cuts are in use, then they are small-scale and unimportant, for the two scenes that Rimsky excised are reinstated here, together with the character of the Lutheran priest who is entirely absent from the earlier version.

IT REMAINS, however, a problematic opera in performance. Some prior knowledge is essential to understand the plot, and this surely was one occasion when the Royal Opera could have broken its principle of giving works in the original language. If the rule can be broken for *Wozzeck*, it can with far more justification be broken for *Khovanshchina*, especially when only one member of the present cast is a native Russian speaker. As it is, the crucial council between the three princes in the second act, when the elaborate power struggle and the roots of the religious enmity are exposed must have been incomprehensible to the vast majority of the audience.

Yet the presence of that one Russian in the cast is almost but not quite sufficient justification in itself. Yevgeny Nesterenko is a superb, dominating Ivan Khovansky, dwarfing in sonorousness and stage presence everyone around him; though there may be a hint of the old Russian ham in some of his gestures, there is no doubting his sovereign control.

Nesterenko apart though, the casting and conducting is often pallid and strangely uncommitted. When he is on stage, the opera can seem like a genuine neglected masterpiece, incisive and cogent; when he is absent, and after Khovansky's death in the fourth scene especially, the seams begin to show. The blame for much of this must be placed on Yevgeny Svetlanov, making his Covent Garden debut. As a conductor in the concert hall he can be exciting and thrillingly original; here, however, he directs an over-careful, lethargic account, as if unsure of his ability to communicate with a group of unfamiliar singers and an uncertain orchestra, though the Opera House band was in one of its more alert and responsive moods. Without a spark of vitality, Musorgsky's subtly inflected accompaniments, of which he was so proud, scrupulously following the speech rhythms of the Russian language, become tedious; his circular harmonic arguments and repeated phrase patterns pall very quickly. There were moments of quite unnecessary boredom on the first night in an opera that one knows from records can hold the sympathetic listener in thrall.

The impact is not helped by settings that have dated quite embarrassingly in 20 years; flimsy picket fences and papier-maché pillars will not, any more, satisfy an audience used to better, more realistic efforts. The production itself has been thoroughly re-rehearsed for this revival by Jeremy Sutcliffe; it moves fluently enough, though some of the crowd scenes – the essence of the work in Musorgsky's eyes – are untidy and under-detailed.

More intelligence could perhaps have been extracted from the cast also. Robert Tear's Golïtsin and Donald McIntyre's Shaklovity work hard at keeping up with Nesterenko's example; Gwynne Howell makes the Old Believer Dosifey a rather muted figure – Stasov and the composer envisaged him as the central figure in the drama, and only the nobility of Howell's tone matches up to this. There is a neat, bright debut from Helen Field as Emma, but Yvonne Minton is a disappointing Marfa, unfailingly refined but too often flat and always inclined to approach notes from beneath.

The rest is undistinguished, and the feeling remains that if an opera is going to be presented only once a decade it should be better served and at least occasionally refurbished. Musorgsky's genius needs sympathetic handling, nowhere more obviously than in his operas. That careful hand is not too evident in the current revival, though when the music flares and the set pieces come off one can believe again that **Khovanshchina** could be made to work on stage. It remains, for all its imperfections, essential listening; goodness knows when another chance will come. □

THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Up and coming

The Hard Shoulder
STEPHEN FAGAN *Hampstead*
Bows and Arrows
LENKA JANURIEK
Rita, Sue and Bob Too
ANDREA DUNBAR *Royal Court*
L'Os
BIRAGO DIOP *Almeida*
Antony and Cleopatra
SHAKESPEARE *Other Place, Stratford*

An area which is 'going up' is one in which the local Co-op is replaced by yet another estate agent, the chemist's by a shop specialising in antique porcelain, and the people whose families have been there for generations by young meteors with Saabs or Volvos. I should know, I've lived in one for 15 years, and seen it change from a shambling urban village into a place without a grocer's, a butcher's, a barber's or a newsagent's, because no small tradesmen can afford the rents. Where do all these new, thrusting residents come from? How are they able, in what's reliably rumoured to be a recession, to pay £80,000 for a slice of working-class terrace? Stephen Fagan has no answer to these questions, but he has much to say about a third: who are the entrepreneurial pathfinders with the foresight to see the gold beneath the dingy pavements and the skill to mine it?

The protagonist of his **Hard Shoulder** is one Toby Savage, who is 'in' wine and keen to diversify. His chance comes in a rundown square marooned in the no-man's-land between a 'good' and a 'bad' part of N1 and blighted by plans for a motorway. If the local elections go the way he calculates, these will be cancelled, and he will make a financial killing on the houses he's bought for conversion. It's one of Mr Fagan's many nice, ironic touches that the party which will thus enrich our Savage is self-evidently Labour, and seemingly a Livingstone-type administration properly anxious to put homes before roads; and it is, I think, a sign of his artistry that he never actually tells us so. His is not a play that preaches gratuitous sermons on the evils of property development or even waxes explicit and solemn on the subject. Rather, he demolishes through laughter, giving us the evidence as he sees it, and trusting us to spot the hypocrisies, injustices and absurdities of a society in which a basic human right – somewhere to live and be secure – remains as much in the hands of private sharks as in those of the elected representatives of the public at large.

Labour wins, but does not immediately carry out its campaign pledge, to the horror of Savage, whose main irritation to date has been that by 'improving' the square he may

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be enriching neighbours who have paid him nothing. Toby the Volvo-owner and self-confessed roadhog thereupon launches into a feverish crusade against the brutality of motor-cars, and, when this proves unsuccessful, follows the professional advice of his builder, a moonlighting fireman, and – but to say more would be to spoil a play not without its twists and surprises. Indeed, Mr Fagan seems able to tell a good story, construct an entertaining situation, turn a telling line, bring understanding and even sympathy to an unattractive character, and then, without damage to truth or tone, thrust his satiric knife deep into that character's guts. He is a find, and a find well served by Nancy Meckler's cast, especially by Peter Blythe as Toby, who manages to be sharp in mind, speech, eyes and even nose: a foxy fanatic who, not content with digesting the odd hen, has decided to go into the battery-building business and prey off us all.

Elsewhere, things have been outpacing my torpid typewriter; and I must catch up with the news. Lenka Januriek's contribution to the Royal Court's Young Writers' Festival left me, I fear, quite untouched; but Andrea Dunbar confirms that her *Arbor* wasn't just a quasi-autobiographical accident, with a play about a frustrated husband and his teenage babysitters that combines unaffected, indeed robust, indeed hilariously raunchy observation with a new sophistication of construction and timing.

L'Os is a recreation of a production mounted by Peter Brook in his Paris smithy: an African tale about a greedy villager who allows himself to be buried alive rather than sacrifice a marrow-bone to the common weal, as local ethics demand. It is a piece born of poverty and hunger, and exceedingly cynical about human nature, yet performed with a rough, clownish ebullience which amused an audience that cannot entirely have consisted of patronising sophisticates eager to show their appreciation of equatorial innocence. Malick Bowens, playing the obsessional protagonist, is lucky to emerge with eyes and larynx intact, so often do the former threaten to pop out and the latter to disappear in a gargle of r's.

Brook's last production in England was, of course, *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1978; and Adrian Noble follows his lead in emphasising the private parts of the play rather than the public. Or has this simply been dictated by the confines of the Other Place, all claustrophobic blacks on a base of white lino, and not the sort of place in which it's easy to imagine empires being won or lost? Antony is Michael Gambon, a grizzled, lordly sugar-daddy rather than a credible general; and Helen Mirren makes a trim, blonde Cleopatra, her skin smacking less of the pyramids in summer than of a long wet winter in Blackpool. Though she has some plausibly fierce and even frenzied moments, and achieves a marvellous dignity near death, there's something over-English about her eroticism, too: too little the musky, overblown rose, too much one of the flowers that bloom in the spring. Still, Enobarbus says she would 'hop 40 paces in the public street'; and Ms Mirren's rather roguish Cleo might certainly do that. □

TELEVISION
William Boyd

True grit

NEXT WEEK Channel 4 starts. Are the other TV companies getting edgy? There certainly seems to have been something of a surge of decent programmes in the last few days – *good* television in the widest sense of the word. **Wagner's Ring** (BBC-2) advanced another act, and the first **Play for Today** (BBC-1) offered us a new Poliakoff, teasingly episodic – this trait becoming a distinctive feature of his TV work – and with a superb performance from Ian Holm as the homesick and paranoid Russian journalist, his most subtle and accomplished role since *The Bell*. **Harry's Game** (Yorkshire), over by the time you read this, made a very promising start in the first episode about what turned out to be a horrifically pertinent subject given the tit-for-tat murders going on in Ulster. As so often happens, reality can undermine art's ambitions with conspicuous ease. The deeply depressing events of the news tended to expose the thrillerish conventions of *Harry's Game* to the series' detriment. There is a temptation to be seduced by the fictional version of reality: it has a shape, a structure; someone out there is controlling it; it's somehow easier to accept. The temptation is most damagingly exposed when the film, the book or the play has a depressing and hopeless contemporary context – where the claims of art can be readily compared with life. On that score, gripping though *Harry's Game* is, I'm very reluctant to give it much credence.

The same reluctance doesn't apply with Alan Bleasdale's **Boys from the Black Stuff** (BBC-2) or at least it doesn't apply with most of it. The third play in the series provided the week's most powerful drama as we watched Chrissie's marriage begin to crumble under the strain of his inability to find work. The domestic scenes between Chrissie (Michael Angelis) and his wife (Julie Walters) were excellent and moving. Very fine performances from the actors. But these scenes were counterposed by life in the offices of the DoE fraud squad and here Bleasdale changed tone. We got a sort of cynical sit-com atmosphere – larky and almost camp. I thought it was all a bit silly and it appeared even odder in contrast to the very serious business that Chrissie's fraught marriage dramatised. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with this sort of changing tack – we can laugh *and* cry; it doesn't have to be one or the other – but here the juxtaposition didn't come off: the whacky mannerisms of the fraud squad seemed to belong to another play altogether.

The very worthwhile and valuable **Bookshow** (BBC-2) also came to an end. The

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high spots were the two engaging and nicely quirky film profiles of Paul Theroux and Molly Keane. The least satisfactory was the programme on writing about war. Again, it was a good idea but the composition of the guests was unsuitable: General 'Third World War' Hackett and Max 'Port Stanley' Hastings against the lone novelist Leslie Thomas. Thomas handed in the towel too early and what we ended up with was a cosy officers' mess chat about all the positive virtues of war: heroism, honour, duty, loyalty, courage and camaraderie. These things exist, sure, but not in anything like the quantities that people imagine. Moreover, these concepts dominate writing about war to a quite astonishing degree. One expects to find them aired in propaganda exercises, but the extent to which they still figure in novels and so-called objective or historical accounts is remarkable. It's a romantic view of war but it's seldom acknowledged as such. In Thomas's works the opposite view occasionally makes an appearance, but he let the spirit of the officers' mess lead the field.

The romantic view of war has emerged to counterbalance the inescapable brutal truths. Something good, the argument runs, must come out of all that bad, otherwise what would be the point? How could we ever come to terms with it? This was one of the few occasions when the inclination to be judicious is wrong.

But one beneficial product of this inclination has been the appearance of the first of six films: **Kingswood: A Comprehensive School** (BBC-2) made by the same team that produced *Public School* – the glossy advertisement for Radley. That programme so rarely got within a mile of the realities that one wonders just how accurate *Kingswood* will be. Nonetheless, it's a valuable exercise, and, in its own way, educational. This week we watched three new kids start their first term.

Ideally each episode should be shown alternately with one from *Public School* so that comparisons could be more effectively made, because it's in the exposing of the differences between the attitudes and approaches of the two systems that these documentaries are most valuable. Actually 'differences' is too inadequate a word: unbridgeable gulfs would be more accurate. It would be fascinating to see, for example, the two welcoming speeches of the respective headmasters set side by side: muted, modest pragmatism versus myth, hot air and sententiousness.

One portrait of a comprehensive school positively guaranteed to give offence is that of Cringe Hill as featured in the first episode of Andrew Davies' very funny and ruthlessly anarchic **Educating Marmalade** (Thames). Here the school is a spraygunned no-man's-land terrorised by superannuated yobs. Lots of famous names star in these energetic 15-minute stories and they clearly had one hell of a good time. Each episode has the eponymous heroine subjected to a different type of education. It's broadcast as a children's programme, but, as they say on the better board games, it's suitable for anyone between eight and eighty. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Swiss miss

Five Days One Summer (A) *Warner West End; ABC Fulham Road*
The Last Movie (X) *ICA now; Edinburgh Filmhouse from 1 November*
The Plague Dogs (A) *Odeon, Haymarket*
Race for the Yankee Zephyr (A) *Classic, Oxford Street; Odeon, Kensington; national release*

Things could hardly look less propitious from the outset. A pleasant-faced girl quietly lowers herself from a couchette and, as the train rolls on through the night, she stations herself in the corridor with a cigarette, her expression a pained question mark. It is 1932 and the morning. Herr Doktor and the girl disembark somewhere in Switzerland. 'The bus has lost a shoe,' explains a waiting driver, genially excusing the delay. Once in the horse taxi with her much older companion (her husband, one presumes), she smiles quite merrily at the passing scenery, of which there is plenty. The couple stroll the last half-mile to their hotel. Music comes from a gramophone, there is dancing on the terrace outside, she eagerly persuades her husband to whirl with her even before they mount to their room. Then they are finally alone together upstairs, the quizzical manager a little slow to leave, popping his head back to remind them of the dinner hour. She embraces him and he responds. Then, 'Kate, are you happy?' he asks, suddenly anxious. She utters the fateful words. 'On this day, at this hour, I am happy. Thank you for bringing me here.' So who's counting, already? And who talks like that, so nice and precise? Happy is happy and to hell with it.

Next day, the older fellow has engaged a guide for climbing. Up in their bedroom, Kate is weeping. 'I'm completely happy one moment, the next I'm completely sad . . . I can't bear it.' Her man looks tormented: 'I wish to God there was something to be done about it.' Which is where the first of many little flashbacks lets us into the cause of their misery.

Balding Douglas (Sean Connery) is just back from Abroad (India?) after nine years; Kate, a little girl when he left, has grown up and is now our twentyish Kate (Betsy Brantley), owner of the other half of the Clyde shipping concern they meet in; Douglas is married. The message and, in fact, the whole nerveless thrust of Fred Zinnemann's **Five Days One Summer** is already fully exposed. Even without the raised eyebrows of spinsterish fellow-guests at the hotel, even without the meaningful glances soon passing between Kate and the spaniel eyes of handsome, prudish young guide Johann (Lambert Wilson), quite certainly without the Big Irony when a white-haired old woman is confronted with the 40-year-frozen and perfectly preserved corpse of her bridegroom (January and May in reverse), there is nowhere for poor, guilt-ridden Kate and her passionate old Douglas to go but down.

Not for the first time Mr Zinnemann, working from a Michael Austin screenplay in part based on a Kay Boyle short story, has allowed the pernicious anaemia of 'good taste' to undernourish his judgment. Even the climbing sequences, apparently arduously shot and not without hazards, generate little excitement; and the last and literal dying fall when Johann and Douglas make a difficult descent in tandem, and only one survives (guess who?), is down to a fluke: a trapped rope, a tug on it releasing a small avalanche of lethal rocks. One goes on at such length, I suspect, because this long-mooted project is so singularly unaffecting, mishandled at almost every juncture. When a flashback follows Kate's opening of Douglas's wife-inscribed cigarette case, what's left of the heart quite shrivels. And yet the American actress Betsy Brantley has just the right period look for Kate and probably the fire, too, to have lent some force to this penny-whistle elegy.

AN utterly contrasting way of making a rotten film is offered in Dennis Hopper's 1971 **The Last Movie**. The history of this flashy ego-trip has surely been sufficiently rehearsed by now, which is more than might be said of the performances. But that, one will be told, is the whole point. After the unexpected success of *Easy Rider* Hopper had a million bucks and total control from Universal. Well, he did his own thing, got director Samuel Fuller to play a director directing a Billy the Kid western in Peru and enlisted a lot of chums to play bit parts. Hopper himself plays Kansas, the unit's wrangler, a loudmouth with grandiose plans who stayed on with a local whore after the 'Billy the Kid' crowd left. There is some colourful, angled footage of faces and masks and processions that suggests photographer Laszlo Kovacs had delusions of being Eisenstein in Mexico. There is also a provocative notion of having the 'dumb' Peruvian villagers fabricate a quasi-religious movie-making ritual of their own, complete with wickerwork models of the original unit's sound and camera equipment. Only they seem to want a *real* death, with real bullets. So Kansas/Hopper seems to be under threat and gets winged. Or does he? By the end anything goes: and it goes west.

Briefly: **The Plague Dogs,** an animation sited on Richard Adams's book, has a fly, fells-wise fox (well voiced by James Bolam), a few agonising glimpses of lab monkeys, but the behaviour of the pair of dogs escaped from a Lake District research station is a mix of anthropomorphism and savagery: humans tend to be jerky shits. David Hemmings's **Race for the Yankee Zephyr,** set in lovely New Zealand, is knockabout farce around the wreck of a bullion-laden US Navy plane crashed back in '44: guffaws of uninfectious laughter thunder from the screen. □

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WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2743 **Set by Robin Chase**

Let's have a passage from some future historical novel, set in 1982, in which there are numerous errors of detail. (An uncertainty about the type of goods supplied by the Army and Navy Stores – well, you can use your nous.) Up to 140 words, by 12 November.

No 2740 **Set by Mr Chubby**

Song stylist: A singer. *Singing personality:* A lousy singer. We asked for equally honest definitions of other terms used in showbiz, journalism, politics or sport.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

And we got 'em – dozens of smart-ass one-liners. Two quid a quip.

Plucky little competitor: Loser
Showed tremendous courage: Hopelessly outclassed British loser
A great British performance: Second place
Ruthless professional: A foreign winner
Absorbing midfield battle: A goalless draw
V. ERNEST COX

Colourful: Drunk
Flamboyant: Persistently drunk
Brash: Obnoxiously drunk
JAMIE RICHARDSON

Direct player: A clogger
Fearless: A brainless clogger
High work-rate: No skill
F. BUTLER

Alternative comedy: Four-letter words
KIRSTY BAIRD

Elder statesman: Old has-been, long since voted out of office, now self-proclaimed expert on everything
Able politician: MP who has managed to avoid making too many mistakes, by not taking any decisions
Very able politician: MP who has taken some decisions but managed to cover up the consequences
W. J. DAVIES

A flop: A major athlete who usually comes first coming second by a fraction of a second
To rediscover faith in oneself: Start winning again
COLIN PADGETT

Controversial local authority: A Labour council
JIM ANTHONY

Another chance to see: Repeat
For the first time on BBC-1: Repeat from BBC-2
A film for all the family: A film with a dog in it
A heart-warming film for all the family: A film with a dead dog in it
N. J. WARBURTON

A fine advert for the game: More than one goal, no sendings-off
Football was the only winner: A score-draw, no sendings-off, no crowd trouble
Football was the only loser: No-score draw, sendings-off, pitch invasion, baton charge, smoke bombs, etc.
Clown prince: Sportsman who indulges in infantile by-play with crowd on the way to resounding defeat
Zany humour: Jokes that the governors of the BBC don't understand but that they think will appeal to young people
LINDSAY CAMP

TAKING PART

John McVicar

Old age pensioner

I COME FROM one of those complicated extended families that nowadays tend to be restricted to the upper and under classes. At the centre of my untidy circle of mainly impoverished relations is a 66-year-old diamond of a woman whom everyone calls Auntie May. Most of May's life seems to have been spent helping others – cooking, cleaning, rearing children and so on.

She's a small purposeful woman who either seems to be bustling about in the kitchen or rushing up to the shops. A widow and with her children scattered, she lives on her own in an old, terraced council house in North London. I try to visit her once a week to see she's okay, but she is a bit difficult. Like a lot of diehard providers she is touchy about accepting help and makes a fetish of living off her pension. But she's healthy enough despite smoking and a recently developed taste for gut-rot sherry.

In March, I was in her kitchen and opened the fridge. There were too many small luxuries there – bacon in case I came round hungry, chocolate for her grandchildren. I'd had my suspicions before, but this time it jelled – she was shoplifting.

I felt sick as I thought of her being driven to stealing, the degradation if she was caught and the shame of going to court. She's always been respectable. There wasn't much I could do because tackling her about it would only have made matters worse.

Things like this I tend to think of as being amenable to money. But, although I do manage to give her the odd tenner, there is a dreadful rigmarole to be gone through first. The only money she receives as of right is her old-age pension, so anything given she views as a kind of handout, or charity.

After I tumbled her shoplifting I stepped up my visits. When I was there I'd make a point of picking up any items that I fancied she'd nicked – and that I knew she didn't have a need for – and ask innocently: 'What on earth d'you buy this for?' I wanted to establish the fact that I knew about the shoplifting before actually raising it.

It was about this time that she mentioned that her handbag was getting old. Mentioning that something is old or giving trouble is about as far as she goes to ask for help. It looked okay to me but I thought 'buy her one in case she tries to nick one.' Off we went to a shopping arcade in Brent Cross where she knew there was a bag shop.

Now, as any busy, important person knows who has ever taken an elderly relative shopping, what you have to do on these missions, if you're not going to spend the whole day looking and never buying, is harass them. After May'd spent about ten minutes meandering round looking at everything from wallets to jumbo suitcases, I moved in to cut down the options. I bullied her over to the section that had roughly the kind of bag she wanted – one about 18" long with lots of small outside pockets.

My next manoeuvre was to spot the best quality bag of the type she wanted, switch the price tag from a cheaper bag, then before the frustration became unbearable discover it was the best buy. I'm a master at this whole procedure, having done it with everything from kettles to lawnmowers. According to the terrain, I recruit the shop assistant in the conspiracy, or I distract May so that I can pay without her seeing how much it costs.

Anyway, having done the groundwork, it was eureka time. 'Here May, this is the one for you and it's only 15 quid.' Her bargain-hunting eyes, sharpened by a lifetime's poverty, locked onto the bag. She took it from me, checked the price tag, felt it, then looked inside. She shook her head decisively. 'It's no good. I want one like my old one. One with two middle pockets.' She held out her old one, opening it up so I could see what she meant. It had two zippers running along the top which divided the main body of the bag into two compartments. The lining between the two sections, though, was ruined, despite evidence of her trying to mend it.

The tumblers in my brain started swimming, then click – this was her shoplifting bag. She wanders round examining goods, puts the items she is going to pay for in the front compartment, and the rest in the back one. Of course if she gets captured, she acts like a confused old lady who accidently put some items in the wrong opening. The torn lining must have been her equivalent of no brakes to a racing-car driver.

She handed me the bag back and reached for one that from the number of zips on the top looked like it'd been made by a Chinese box designer. She snatched it – it was a cheapo, but never mind the quality, what about the compartments! Her white knuckles and her triumphant expression should have told me it was time to go quietly and just buy it for her. Instead I tried to press my bag on her. 'It's too dear,' she said sharply. I blustered a bit until she said finally, 'I'll buy my own bag. You'd think from the way you're carrying on, it was for you not me.' She got her way – I bought the bag. What else could I do?

I don't know what the answer is but nowadays, when I see a pack of lamb chops in her fridge, I don't bother making a pointed remark. At the end of her time, she sees many of the youngsters in whom she's invested her life out of work and despairing. She doesn't understand it, but she feels that all that battling and struggling and going without to help her family has been wasted. She doesn't have any power at all to hit at what's closing in on her. I guess nicking a pack of bacon is her way – her only way – of hitting back at the system. □

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ROMANTIC LADY, Cathy looking for Heathcliffe, female early fifties, seeks caring partner to share trusting relationship. Interests: Writing, music, alternative living, sense of humour. Box 4990.

SOUTH LONDON based female graduate, pushing 40, and son aged 7, seek a nice man's company. Box 5022.

TALL, LIFE-LOVING, humorous man, tripping through forties disguised as younger model, is unsuccessfully attached and seeks lady (perhaps similarly placed?). For mutually satisfying, hassle-free adventure. Box 4996.

THINK TANK: A non-partisan current affairs, research and discussion club. Details: Box 1584, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2Z6, Canada.

WARM, ATTRACTIVE graduate woman, 43, div., home-loving, seeks unattached professional man for affectionate, close relationship. Interests: music, personal growth, family life. Box 4948.

WARM, GENTLE, humorous female, sought by similar male, 25. Perhaps lover of books, music or countryside? Do write. Box 5020.

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FRI 29 OCT

BRISTOL. 'Ireland: Politics and Technology of Repression?' I.R.S.P. speaker and others, *followed by social. 7.30pm. Swan Hotel, Stokes* Croft. Org. by Troops Out Movement.

LONDON NW1. Tony Benn debates Giorgio Napolitano. 7.30pm. Friends House, Euston Road. Co-sponsored by New Socialist & Marxism Today. £1 at door or £1 in advance from New Socialist, 150 Walworth Road, SE17.

LONDON, E1. to 31 OCT. The Moving Left Show. Over 50 sessions on wide range of Left topics plus evening music, theatre, comedy. Queen Mary College, Mile End. Info & Free programme. Jo Newman, 16 St John Street, EC1. **01-251 4406.**

LONDON WC1. T. F. Evans on 'The Black Girl, 50 years on'. 6.30pm. Shaw Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

LONDON SW1. Eric Bogosian's 'Men Inside' and 'Voices of America'. 8pm. ICA, New York Live Season, The Mall. Tel: **01-930 3647.**

SAT 30 OCT

LEEDS. Politics of Health Conference. Leeds Univ. Union. Until 31 Oct. £1.50. Reg. 9.30-10.15am. Details Third World First. **0532 430151.**

STOCKPORT. Families for Peace Walk. Assemble 1.30pm Kennerley Road, walk to Edgelley Puppet Theatre, balloons, badges etc.

LONDON SW4. Marxism & Literature at 52 Clapham High Street, Questions & Discussion. Org. by SPGB. 7.30pm. **65-24524.**

WEMBLEY. International Conference on Active Birth. Details: Active Birth Movement, 32 Cholmeley Crescent, London N6 5JR. Tel: **01-348 4636.**

LONDON SE1. National Conference of 'C.L.P's Against the Witch-hunt' 10am. Main Conference Hall, County Hall. £1 to Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP, 107 Neville Road, N16.

LONDON W11. Ayurvedic Medicine Workshop with Doctor Ashwin Barot. 12 noon. Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre, 50 Chepstow Villas.

LONDON WC1. Radical Alternatives to Prison's AGM. 10am. Free. Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Tel: **01-674 1236**

LONDON NW8. ILEA Cockpit Theatre presents 'Theatre or No Social Security', a statement through 3 shows. Tel: **01-262 7907.**

Greenham Common until 1 Nov. Halloween celebration/workshops on direct action. Green Gate/Works Entrance. Tel: **07255-652.**

SUN 31 OCT

LEICESTER. Lecture – 'Trends in Modern Marxism' by Paul Winstone. 6.30pm. Leicester Secular Soc., Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate.

LONDON N22. Cast presents New Variety – Chip Shop Show, Belinda Blanchard, Flying Pickets, Mr Clean. 8pm. Brabant Road Centre, 2a Brabant Road. Wood Green. Tel: **01-487 3440.**

CROYDON. 'Sunday Allsorts' at the Warehouse. Margritte, The Mind-Reading Rat and The Freudian Road-Show. The White Washed Set, The Legendary Cannelloni Brothers, Time Limit. 7.30pm. £1.50 (£1 u/w). 62 Dingwall Road.

MON 1 NOV

LONDON SE1. London Chartist/Clause Four Lecture Series: 2. 'Socialism and Representative Democracy'. 7.15pm. £1 (50p u/w). Play Assoc., 218 Lambeth Road. Tel: **01-802 1018.**

LONDON W1. Radical Nurses Group meeting – 'The Nursing Process'. 6.30pm. 9 Poland Street.

LONDON W1. Judith Herrin on 'Women, Art and Early Christianity'. 7.30pm. History Workshop, Black Horse pub, Rathbone Place.

TUES 2 NOV

CAMBRIDGE. Radical Film season – 'Last Grave at Dimbeza' and 'Welcome to Britain'. 6.30pm. £1 (50p u/w). Cambridge College of Arts and Tech., Collier Road.

LONDON WC1. 'The Antidote for Inferiority Feelings" – Prof Manford Sonstegard. Adlerian Soc. 7.30pm. 75p. Community Rooms, 36 Millman Street.

WED 3 NOV

LONDON W8. Stephen Spender at The Kensington Bookshop. 8pm. £1. 140 Church Street.

MANCHESTER. Susan Griffin talks on 'Pornography, Culture and Nature'. 7.30pm. £1 (50p u/w). Renold Bldg., UMIST.

LONDON WC1. Film – 'The Question of Irish POWs'. NLISC. 7.30pm. 50p (30p u/w). Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road.

NORWICH. Palestinian film – 'On Our Land'. *7.30pm. CAABU/Arab Soc., UEA, Lecture Theatre* 4.

THUR 4 NOV

LONDON WC1. Susan Griffin talks on 'Pornography, Culture and Nature'. 7.30pm. £2 (£1 u/w). Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

LONDON SW1. Richard Hamilton talks with Michael Compton about his work and new book 'Collected Words'. 1pm. £1.25. Ted Honderich and Margaret Drabble discuss moral responsibility in 'Pictures of the Mind'. 7.30pm. £1.25. ICA, The Mall. Tel: **01-930 3647.**

SAT 6 NOV

EDINBURGH. Christian CND Dayschool on 'Peacemaking, what we can do'. 10am. £2 (£1 u/w). The Cornerstone, West End.

BIRMINGHAM. Weekend of Cuban Cinema. Tel: **021-359 2403/7682.** Birmingham Arts Lab., Holt Street, B7.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

BIRMINGHAM. Fabian Society. – 'After Scarman: The Police and the Community'. 2.15pm. Free. 'Winterbourne', 58 Edgbaston Park Road, B15. Tel: **021-471 1362.**

LONDON WC1. Saturday School – 'Women and Sociobiology'. 10am. Lecture Room, 26 Russell Square. Tel: **01-636 8000 ext 3853.** Also, on 13 Nov, 'Psychology and Sexual Difference'. University of London Dept of Extra-Mural studies.

FORTHCOMING

31 OCTOBER. LONDON, W1. Chile Solidarity Campaign presents Inti-Illimani and Paco Pena in concert. 7 p.m. Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Ct. Rd. Box Office. **01-580 9562.**

1 NOVEMBER. MIAMI, FLORIDA. Deadline for Papers and Registrations for 'Faculty (Staff) Development and Evaluation – 2nd International Seminar', 29/12/82-5/1/83. Details: Chris de Winter Hebron, Humanities Faculty, Newcastle Polytechnic. **0632 612181.**

2 NOVEMBER. LONDON, WC1. Kirsten Sonstegard on 'Psychodrama'. 7.30 p.m. Community Rooms, 26 Millman St.

4 NOVEMBER. MANCHESTER. Meeting, 'The Politics of the Peace Movement', Man. Socialist Soc. 8 p.m. Black Lion Hotel, Blackfriars St., Salford. **061-224 5378/4339.**

5 NOVEMBER. LEICESTER. *Poetry Reading* inc. Michele Roberts. 7.30 p.m. Blackthorn Books, High St.

5-6 NOVEMBER, LONDON WC1. Fifth Socialist Book Fair. Complete display of socialist, radical and trade union literature. (Details of stands, etc. Tel: Bookmarks 01-802 6145.) Camden Town Hall, Euston Road.

5-9 NOVEMBER, SHEFFIELD. History Workshop 16. Subjects inc. Sexual Politics, the State, Peace Movements, People's History. Speakers – Raphael Samuel, Sheila Rowbotham, Royden Harrison, Anna Davin. Sheffield City Poly, Pond St. site. **0742 615388.**

6 NOVEMBER, LONDON SW1. 'Stop Sizewell B' Rally and conference. Speakers – David Ennals MP, Arthur Scargill, Ken Cameron, Colin Sweet, Dr Don Arnott. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Central Hall, Westminster. **0742-754691.**

6 NOVEMBER. MANCHESTER 20. The Peace Movement in 1982—Alternative Production. 10 a.m. £2 (50p u/w). Withington Adult Educ. Centre, Mauldeth Rd. **061-861 9205.**

CLOSING 1 NOVEMBER COVENTRY, entry for International Rhyme Revival Poetry and Verse Competition. Rhyming verse wanted. £1,000 in prizes. Details – Coventry Chamber of Commerce, 123 St Nicholas Street, Coventry CV1 4FD. **0203 51777.**

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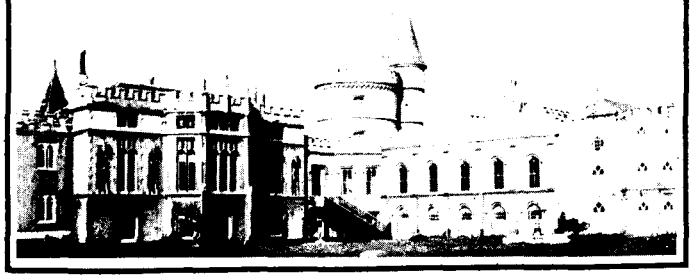

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Book Fair

HAMPSTEAD BOOK FAIR (Secondhand & Antiquarian) Sun. 31 October 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Old Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, NW3 (opp. Belsize Park Stn). Adm. 20p.

Meetings

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. John Lee MP: 'Personal view of the Tory Government'. House of Commons, Wednesday 3 November, 7.30pm.

ICA EVENTS, THE MALL, SW1. 01-930 3647. Tues. 2 Nov. 1.00 SUSAN GRIFFIN 'In Conversation' with GILLIAN HANSCOMBE plus Thurs. 4 Nov. 1.00 RICHARD HAMILTON with MICHAEL COMPTON (Tate); PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION series Thurs. 4 Nov. 7.30 TED HONDERICH discusses with MARGARET DRABBLE free will and moral responsibility; Sat. 6 Nov. 11.00-6.00 critic/writer STUART MORGAN presents a day of art, music and voices from New York in THE LATE LATE SHOW as part of ICA:NY. Talks tickets £1.25, Stuart Morgan £3, all bookable (ICA Day Pass 40p).

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 31 Oct. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Reincarnation & Karma'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Theatres

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ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
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NATIONAL THEATRE. 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'Guys and Dolls', 'Don Quixote', 'Schweyk in the Second World War'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'Major Barbara', 'Way Upstream'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'The Spanish Tragedy', 'The Beggar's Opera'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

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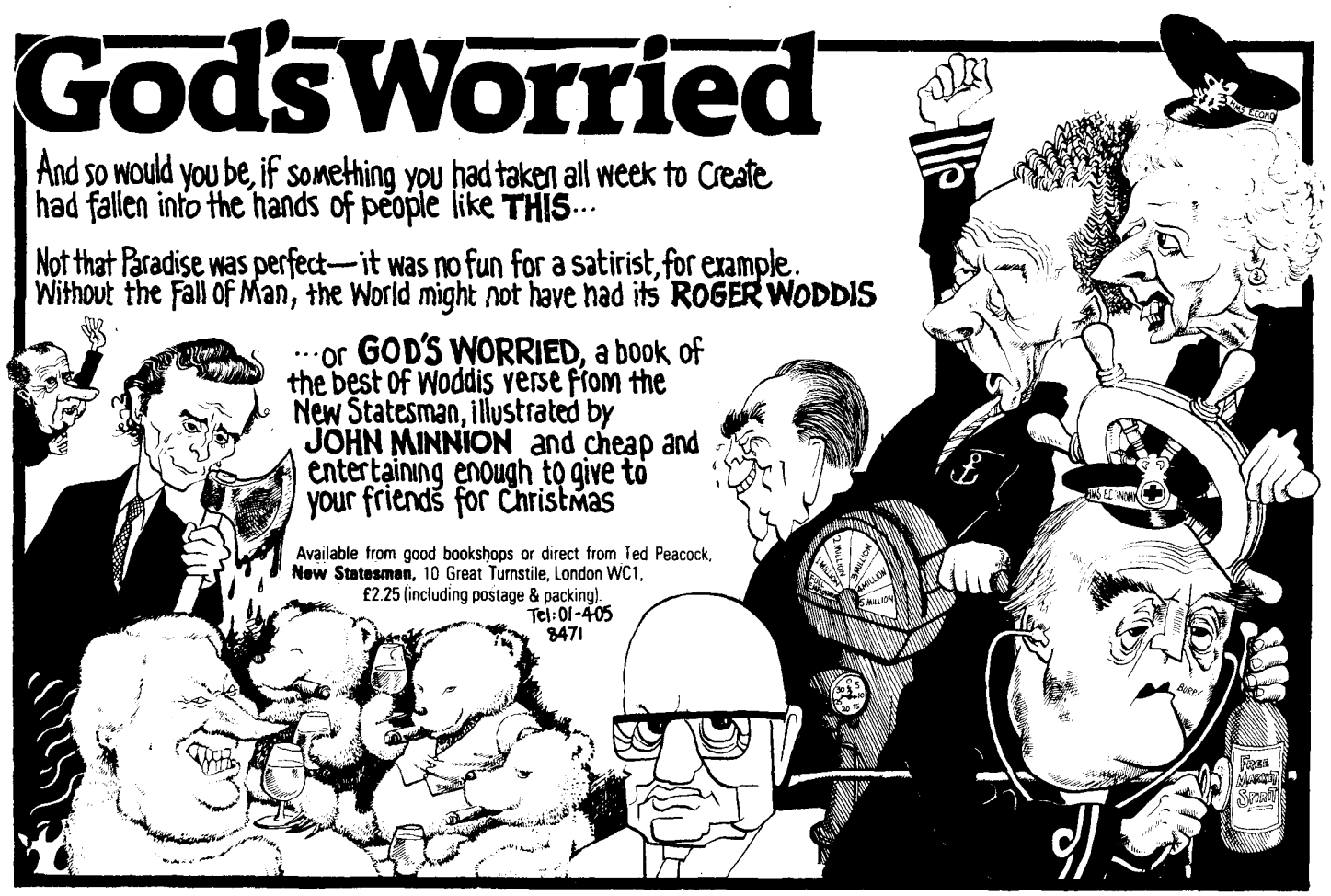

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